THE

# ARGUMENTS

OF THE

BOOKS and CHAPTERS

OFTHE

# NEW TESTAMENT,

With Practical OBSERVATIONS.

Written Originally in French,

By the Reverend Mr OSTERVALD,

Professor of Divinity, and one of the Ministers of the Church at Neufchatel in Swifferland: And by him presented to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Translated by

JOHN CHAMBERLAYNE, Efq;

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

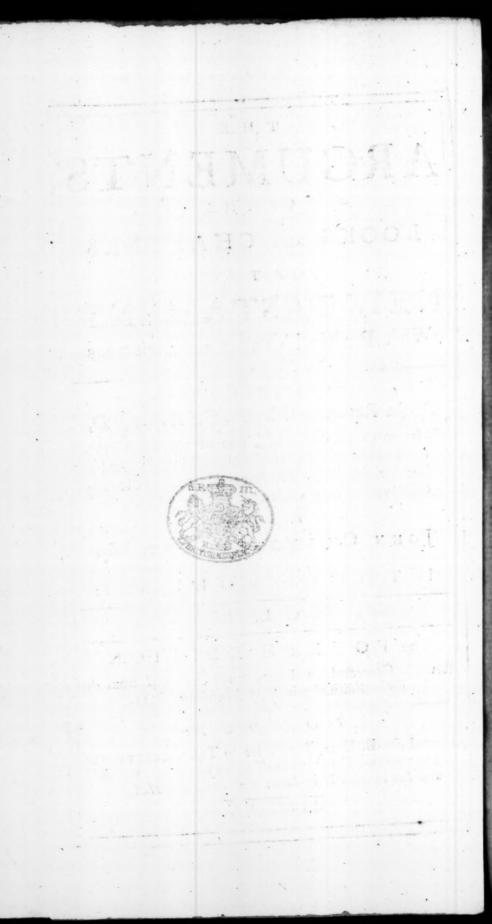
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# ROYAL HIGHNESS

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# PRINCESS

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# MADAM,

THE treatife which I presume to lay at the feet of your Royal Highness, consists of an enumeration of the Arguments of the books and A 2 chapters

chapters in the New Testament, accompanied with theological and moral Resections upon all of them. It was compiled by that eminent Divine Mr Ostervald, at the request of a Society, that has distinguished itself by the most worthy of all purposes, the endeavour of Promoting Christian Knowledge. The work could hardly have a greater recommendation than that of such an assembly; but I can name a still higher advantage to it, the approbation of your illustrious Mother.

THAT it may be useful to your Highness and your Sisters, by forwarding you in the imitation of her Christian and and Royal virtues and accomplishments, is the most fincere and constant prayer of,

MADAM,

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Your Royal Highness's

Most Humble, and

Most Obedient Servant,

John Chamberlayne.

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# GOSPEL

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# ST MATTHEW.

#### ARGUMENT.

We have in the Gospels the history of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, and his ascension into beaven. It is the duty of every Christian to read and hear these divine books with serious attention and prosound reverence; to meditate on them day and night; and to make a right use of the instructions contained in them. — The first of the Four Gospels, which is that of the apostle St Matthew, is thought to have been written about eight years after our Lord's ascension.

# CHAP. I.

of Jesus Christ, from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of the blessed virgin. II. A short relation of the conception and birth of our Lord.

Vol. III.

REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

THE genealogy of Jesus Christ, which is recited in the first chapter of St Matthew, shews that he is descended from the patriarch Abraham, and from king David, as was foretold by the prophets. And the history of his conception and birth teaches us, that he was born of the virgin Mary after a wonderful manner, by the operation of the holy Ghost, according to the prediction of the prophet Isaiah. Both our Lord's genealogy, and the manner of his conception and birth, prove him to be the Messiah whom God had promifed to fend; and that in him the promifes of God, and the propecies of the old testament, had their accomplishment: This engages us to receive him as our Saviour, to submit to his doctrine, and to render thanks to God for giving us his only Son for our redeemer, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom. i. 3 and who is over all, God bleffed for ever. Amen. Rom. ix. 5.

#### CHAP. II.

THIS chapter contains four things: I. The arrival of the Magi that came to worship Jesus after his birth. These Magi were men of great learning and high rank, who came from Arabia, or some other country lying to the east of Judea. II. The retreat of Joseph and Mary, who sled into Egypt with the child Jesus, to avoid the rage of Herod. III. The slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, whom Herod caused to be murdered, thinking to destroy our Lord among them. IV. The return of Joseph and Mary to Judea, after the death of Herod.

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T Hele are the observations that may be made upon this chapter: I. The first is, that the wise men came to worship Jesus after his birth, being guided by a miraculous star, which God caused to appear; to which, no doubt, was added some kind of revelation from heaven: God was pleafed thereby to render that birth illustrious, and to shew the dignity of the person of our Lord; and inform the Jews that the Messiah, whom they expected, was going to make his appearance; and it likewise denoted, that the Gentiles would foon be admitted into covenant with II. Herod's consulting the chief priests and scribes, and the answer they made, prove that the Messiah was expected at that time; and that Betblehem, it was thought, would be the place of his birth. III. The homage which these wise men of the east paid to the child Jesus, falling down before him, and presenting unto him their gifts, should excite us, who know he is our God and our Saviour, to worship him, love and praise him, and to devote to him all that is in our power. IV. We fee in the behaviour of Herod towards the wife men, and in the maffacre which he made of the children of Betblebem, the craft and cruelty of that prince, who neglected no possible means to destroy the child Jesus: And thus was our Lord exposed, even from his birth, to great perils; which shewed, from the very first, that his kingdom was not of this world, and that he was born to fuffer. We may likewise take notice, that God, by the warning which he gave to the wife men, and afterwards to Joseph, defeated Herod's designs, and that all the measures which that unjust and cruel prince had taken to destroy Jesus, as effectual as he thought them, and as they appeared to be, could not procure our Lord's B 2 death.

death, nor prevent his returning into Judea, where he afterwards exercised his ministry. All these events may convince us, that providence did direct, in a particular manner, all that happened to Jesus Christ, and that the utmost endeavours of men can never hinder the execution of what God has purposed, nor hurt those whom he protects.

#### CHAP. III.

THIS chapter confifts of two parts: I. In the first, mention is made of the preaching and ministry of John the Baptist; and, II. In the second, the evangelist relates the history of the baptism of our Lord.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ET us observe in general upon the first part of this chapter, that before the appearance of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, as the prophets had foretold, was fent from God to declare to the Jews the coming of the Messiah, and to exhort them to repentance; by which God was pleafed to teach them, that the time for the manifestation of the Messiah's kingdom was come; but that it would be a spiritual and heavenly, not a temporal or worldly kingdom, as they imagined. With the same view, John the Baptist affured the Jews, that their descending from the patriarch Abraham was a privilege which would by no means fecure them from the divine vengeance, that was ready to fall upon that nation because of their unbelief; and that God would call other nations in their stead, to become, by faith, children of Abraham. In short, he gave them to understand, that Jesus was going to appear, and that it was he who should execute the judgments of God upon the impenitent and unbelieving, and glorioully reward the righteous. Thus God in his wisdom was willing to prepare the Tews

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Jews for receiving Jesus Christ, and remove those prejudices concerning the kingdom of the Meffiah, which might have hindered their believing in him. From the preaching of John the Baptist we may learn, that repentance and holiness of life, is a qualification without which no one can be the disciple of Jesus Christ, nor enter into the kingdom of God. It likewise informs us, that as the unbelieving Jews vainly boafted that they were the children of Abraham, it is no advantage to hypocrites to be externally in covenant with God; that Jesus Christ knows them, and that he will one Day cleanse his church, by casting the wicked into everlafting fire, and by receiving the true believers into his kingdom. As to the baptism of our Lord, it must be observed, that when he was entering upon the discharge of his office, he was baptifed by St John his forerunner; that upon this occasion the holy Ghost descended upon him in a visible manner, and that God caused a voice to be heard from heaven, whereby he declared that Jesus was his beloved Son. God was pleased that all these things should happen, to convince John the Baptist, and all the people, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Thus the history of his baptism obliges us to consider him as the Son of God, and to pay him unreserved obedience. It likewise engages us to reverence the baptism we have received, and by which we have been dedicated to God, made his children, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

# CHAP. IV.

ST Matthew here relates, I. The history of the temptation of Jesus Christ. II. The manner in which he began to exercise his ministry in Galilee, by declaring that the kingdom of God was come, by choosing apostles, and by working miracles.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

IT may be observed in general upon the history of the temptation, that the defign of the devil in tempting our Lord, was to try whether Jesus was the Son of God; and that it pleased God to suffer this temptation, that the devil, convinced of that truth, might reverence the power of Jefus Christ; and that it might appear, that our Lord was come into the world to destroy the kingdom of Satan. Let it also be considered, that if Jesus Christ himself was tempted, we should not be surprised, if we also are exposed to various temptations; and that we ought, in imitation of our Lord, to relift temptations, and particularly fuch as might lead us into distrust, or presumption, or make us grow fond of the honours or riches of this world; or lastly, such as may any way tend to draw us off from the true fervice of God, and from that allegiance we owe him. And the method which Christ made use of to repel the temptations of Satan, by quoting the holy scriptures, shews us, that it is by the word of God that we may defeat temptations, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Three things are to be observed in the latter part of this chapter: first, that Jesus Christ began to exercise his ministry in Galilee, by preaching repentance, as John Baptist had This should convince us more and more, that holiness of life is the great end of the gospel which Christ preached, and what he principally requires of his disciples. II. Our Lord's making choice of fishermen for his apostles, proves, that the wonderful fuccess of their preaching afterwards, did not proceed from themselves, but ought wholly to be ascribed to God, who endowed them with his gifts. Lastly, The wonderful cures by which Jesus made himself known at first, tended to shew, that he was fent

fent from God, that his doctrine was from above, and that he came into the world only for the good and falvation of mankind.

#### CHAP. V. 1-20.

THIS chapter, together with the two following, contains Christ's sermon upon the mount. In the beginning of this sermon, our Lord does two things: I. He teaches us what those dispositions are without which we cannot be truly happy. II. What obligation his disciples are under to live a strictly holy life.

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### REFLECTIONS.

OUR Lord's defign in this discourse, contained in the fifth, fixth, and feventh chapters of St Matthew, in general is, to instruct his disciples in the chief duties of the Christian life; for which reafon, we ought to read and hear it with great attention, and to regulate our behaviour by the divine precepts we find in it. Two things are to be confidered in the first part of this chapter: I. The beatitudes teach us wherein the true happiness of man consists, and how to diftinguish the true disciples of Christ, whose character it is not to set their hearts upon the riches, pleasures or honours of this world, but to be unconcerned about earthly things; to live in meekness, humility, holiness and peace; to defire ardently and above all things to be holy and to please God, and even joyfully to undergo perfecution for the fake of the gospel. II. Jesus Christ has taught us, that his disciples are the falt of the earth and the light of the world; that is, that they ought to diftinguish themfelves from other men by the purity of their lives, and endeavour to enlighten and edify them by their instructions and good examples. He has expressly B 4 declared, declared, that he was so far from coming into the world to dispense with the observation of the law of God, that on the contrary, he came to lay men under still greater obligations to suffil it in the most perfect manner. Lastly; He declares he will not admit into his kingdom, any who had not attained to a greater perfection in righteousness and holiness than that of the scribes and Pharisees, who were esteemed among the Jews men of the greatest knowledge and holiness. All these precepts of our Lord should make us sensible of the indispensible obligation we lie under to study to lead a holy life, and to aspire after the highest degree of perfection we can possibly attain.

### CHAP. V. 21-48.

JESUS CHRIST, to shew that his disciples are called to great holiness, teaches them, that it is not sufficient to abstain from notorious crimes, and such as are expressly condemned in the law of God; but also, that those sins which appear less considerable are to be avoided, and above all, the motions of the heart to be regulated. He instances in the commandments concerning murder, adultery, oaths, revenge, and the love of our neighbours. He corrects the false interpretations which the Jews put upon those commandments, and gives us the true sense and meaning of them.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE explanation which our Lord gives of the chief commandments of the law, teaches us, that God prohibits and punishes not only the great and crying fins mentioned in the decalogue, but that he likewise condemns and punishes us for evil thoughts and evil desires, which the Jewish doctors considered only as light faults: besides this general and very important

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portant lesson, Christ instructs us in these four particular duties: I. That anger, and all terms of reproach and contempt, which proceed from hatred of our neighbour, subject us to condemnation, as well as murder; that, far from hating any one, we ought to labour to have peace with all men; and that we should not present ourselves before God, and offer him our prayers, without doing all that lies in our power to be reconciled to those that have any thing against us. II. The fecond duty relates to purity and chaftity: Our Lord teaches us, that impure defires render us guilty before God, as well as adultery and other acts of uncleanness; that in order to be chaste, we must watch over ourselves, mortify our senses, pluck out an eye, cut off a hand or foot; that is, mortify ourselves and renounce every thing, though most dear and agreeable to us, if it be an occasion of falling. He likewise teaches us, that the marriage engagement cannot be diffolved but by adultery, which shews what obligation Christians are under to chastity. III. The third instruction relates to swearing: The doctrine of the Son of God upon this point is, that it is not sufficient to avoid perjury, which is a very great crime; but that we ought likewife to be fcrupulous in breaking oaths, though not made by the name of God, and entirely to abstain from vain and rash oaths, of what kind foever they be, fince they are forbid by the law of Jesus Christ, and contrary to that reverence that is due to the divinity. IV. The fourth duty is that of charity, and the love of our neighbour: What Christ commands upon that head is, to abstain from revenge, to bear injuries rather than to return evil for evil; to give up our right for peace fake, and to avoid disputes; to love all men, even those that hate us, therein imitating our heavenly Father, who does good to all, even to the wicked and ungrateful: this is the law of the gospel, and of true charity, and in 'the

the practice of all these duties, we shall find our perfection and glory.

#### CHAP. VI.

OUR Lord instructs his disciples in the duties of alms, prayer and fasting; shews them how to discharge those religious acts, and exhorts them above all to avoid hypocrify and oftentation. II. He forbids them to take pains to heap up worldly riches, or to be solicitous for the good things of this life; exhorts them to depend upon providence, and before all things to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter the Saviour of the world teaches us, I. That alms, prayer and fasting, are three very important duties of religion; and as to falting, in particular, it evidently appears, that fince Christ has prescribed rules for the manner of fasting, as well as for prayer and alms, his defign was, that his disciples should fast; private fasts, which are here meant, being very useful to mortify the flesh, and to dispose us for humiliation and prayer; and having been likewife practifed by the apostles, and fince their time by Christians in general throughout the world. II. Our Saviour commands us carefully to avoid hypocrify and vainglory in giving alms, in prayer, and fasting; and to discharge these duties with sincerity and humility, remembring that we are in the presence of God, to whom all the secrets of our hearts are exposed; and that hypocrites have no reward to expect from him. III. Since the Lord's Prayer was composed by Jesus Christ himself, and comprehends all that is necessary for the glory of God and our own happiness, the use we are to make of it is, To offer of

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it up to God with the greatest reverence, fervency and devotion: and in the second place, to adapt, not only our prayers, but likewife our thoughts and behaviour, to that excellent pattern which Christ has left us. IV. Our Lord has declared most expressly. that we must not expect God should hear and pardon us, if we do not likewise pardon all those that have offended us; we ought therefore to examine ourfelves very strictly on this head, before we offer up our prayers to God. V. The fifth lesson which we learn from this chapter is, not eagerly to pursue the treasures of this world, which are vain and uncertain, and which many accidents may deprive us of; but rather to labour after the heavenly treasure, which is in its own nature most excellent, and which nothing can take from us. To this end he represents the danger of loving riches, because such love blinds us. and engages our affections to the earth, and makes it impossible to lift up our hearts to God, to love and ferve him, whilft the love of this world has possession of our hearts. VI. Our Lord does not only forbid us to love riches, but even commands us not to be uneafy, or too folicitous even for the necessaries of life, exhorting us to trust in the providence of God, who, as he takes care for birds and other creatures, will much more provide for the wants of his own children, who are of a more excellent nature, and defigned for immortality.

Our Saviour condemns those worldly cares which are excessive, and attended with uneasiness and distrust, because such cares are unprofitable, and unworthy of christians. Lastly, He exhorts us to endeavour above all things to please God, and to attain the kingdom of heaven; promising us, that if we do so, God will grant us all things necessary for the support of the body. Let us imprint in our minds these divine lessons; let them always be present to

us in the midst of our worldly concerns, to secure us from too strict a union with them, and engage us chiefly to seek after that never-failing treasure which is reserved in heaven for us.

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OUR Lord discourses here of rash judgment; of prudence in proposing truth; of prayer and its efficacy; he prescribes rules of justice and charity; exhorts us to enter in at the strait gate, and to avoid false teachers. He declares, that all who call him Lord will not enter into the kingdom of heaven; and shews by a parable, that it is in vain to hear his word, if we do not practise it.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter contains feveral weighty instructions. I. The first is, not to judge rashly of our neighbour, nor to blame him with too great feverity; to acknowledge our own faults, and amend them, rather than pry too curiously into, and reprove the faults of other men. II. The second is, not to give that which is holy unto dogs; this is a prudential advice, the meaning of which is, That when we have to do with carnal and profane men, who proudly and contemptuously reject the doctrine of the gospel, we ought not to offer it to them, for fear of expoling religion to their hatred and contempt. III. Our Lord exhorts us to pray to God with confidence, affuring us, that prayer is of very great efficacy, provided it be attended with zeal and perseverance, and that we ask of God those things that are really good; this he shews by the comparison between God and our natural parents, who never deny their children the things that are necessary for them. IV. He gives us here a rule of justice and charity, which is,

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to do to others as we would have them do to us; this most perfect, and at the same time most plain and eafy rule, we ought always to have before our eyes. V. He exhorts his disciples to enter in at the strait gate, that is, to follow that faith and piety which leads to falvation, though few people walk in that way, and it be contrary to human passions and inclinations, and even though it should sometimes expose us to persecution; and he commands us to avoid the paths of error and vice, which feem agreeable to flesh and blood; a way in which many people walk, but which leads to destruction. VI. Our Lord bids his disciples beware of impostors and false teachers, which would be very numerous afterwards. The rule he gives is, to judge of them by their fruits; that is, by their works and behaviour, and by the natural effects of their doctrine, taking notice whether it tended to the glory of God, and to make mankind better. VII. After that he declares, that all who profess his religion, and call him their Lord; shall not enter into heaven; that he will receive into it none but fuch as perform his will; and that many who have known him, and have even wrought miracles in his name, shall be shut out of his kingdom, because they have not kept his commandments. VIII. Laftly, He concludes this discourse by the comparison of a house founded upon a rock, with one built upon the fand; by which he fliews, that it is in vain to hear his word, if we do not observe that which he commands; and that those who fail in this effential duty, can never perfevere, nor refift temptation. By this similitude we are taught what use to make of the gospel, and particularly of the instructions contained in this and the two foregoing chapters.

# C H A P. VIII. 1-17:

ST Matthew relates several miracles of Jesus Christ.

I. The healing of a leper. II. That of the servant of a Gentile captain. III. That of St Peter's mother in law, and several other diseased people.

#### REFLECTIONS.

AS this chapter begins the history of our Saviour's miracles, the first observation we shall make relates to those miracles in general; in which we difcover, I. The infinite power of our Lord, which appeared in his healing all kinds of difeases, by his word only. II. His goodness and love towards men, those miracles being nothing else but acts of beneficence. III. We are to consider the design of these miracles, which was to convince men that Jesus was fent from God, and to engage them to hear him, and believe in him; for which reason the miracles he wrought were commonly for the fake of fuch as believed he was able to do them. Besides these general reflections, which ought always to be remembered when we read the gospel, it is to be observed, that in the cure of the leper, our Lord had respect to his faith and prayer; whereby we may fee, that he faves and delivers those who have recourse to him with an humble confidence. Farther, Jesus Christ ordered the leper to go and shew himself to the high priest, and offer what was commanded by the law, to convince the Jews that he was quite cured, and that they might not accuse him of being an enemy to the law The history of the centurion, who enof Moses. treated our Lord to heal his fervant, is particularly remarkable, for the profound humility and furprifing faith of that man, who did not think himself worthy to receive Christ into his house; and was persuaded, that t.

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that without coming to him, our Lord needed only to fay the word, and the fervant would be healed; with as much ease as he, being an officer, could command the foldiers under him to obey him. Our Lord's great commendation of the faith of that officer, (who was born a heathen) faying, that he had not found fuch great faith even among the Jews, obliges us to take great notice of that example, and to imitate the faith and humility of the centurion. Jesus foretold, upon this occasion, that many should come from the east, and from the west, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven, when the children of the kingdom should be cast out; which was as much as to say, That the Gentiles, from the feveral parts of the world, should be admitted into covenant with God, and the Jews rejected; as was foon after verified by the event. Lastly, St Matthew's applying that prophecy of Isaiah, He has borne our griefs and carried our forrows, to our Lord, after his healing St Peter's mother in law and feveral others, teaches us what was the end of all thefe miracles; they were defigned to prove that Jesus was a kind and compaffionate Saviour, and that he only came into the world to do good to mankind; to deliver them from all their miseries, and chiefly from their fins.

## CHAP. VIII. 18-34.

THE latter part of this chapter contains three things. I. Our Saviour's reply to one of the scribes, and to a disciple that defired to follow him. II. The stilling a tempest. III. The cure of two men possessed with devils.

## REFLECTIONS.

I. THE answer which Jesus Christ returned to a scribe that was desirous to follow him, tended to make him sensible, that he was not to expect worldly

worldly advantages in his fervice; and his bidding one of his disciples leave the dead to bury their dead. fignified, that he ought to leave the care of temporal things to those that were not enlightened with the gospel, and that those whom he called to be his disciples should follow him without delay, and be ready to forfake every thing, and to renounce the things of this life, even such as are lawful and innocent, when they hinder them from discharging the duties of their calling. II. In our Saviour's miracle of laying the ftorm, we may observe, on one hand, his power in calming the wind and the fea by his word only; and on the other, the weakness of the apostles, who were afraid of finking. This event, which tended to confirm their faith, ought to strengthen ours, and fill us with an entire confidence in the power and goodness of Jesus Christ. We may be entirely secure, even in the midst of the greatest dangers, when we are beloved by him, and have him for our protector. III. The hiftory of those demoniacks whom our Saviour healed, shews us, that the devil did then exercise his power over men, but that Christ was come to take away that power from him, and to deftroy his kingdom. As to what happened to the herd of fwine, which ran headlong into the fea, after the devils had entered into them by the permission of our Lord; it must be considered, that he was pleased by this lofs to try and punish the inhabitants of that country, and to shew that the men whom he had healed were really possessed; that he had power over devils, and that those evil spirits could do nothing without his permission; and the whole may serve to convince men of the power of Jesus Christ, to inform them of the end of his coming into the world, and fully to perfuade them of the truth of his doctrine.

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This chapter contains: I. The cure of a man that had the palfy. II. The calling of St Matthew to the office of an apostle: and Christ's answer to those that were offended at his eating with sinners. III. His reply to the disciples of John the baptist, when they asked him, why his disciples did not fast as well as they? IV. The cure of a woman that had an issue of blood. V. The raising to life the ruler's daughter. VI. The giving sight to two blind men, and delivering the dumb man possessed with a devil. Lastly, Our Lord's exhortation to his disciples, to pray that God would send men to labour in the conversion of the people.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THERE may be two reflections made upon the healing the paralytic. The first, That our Lord had regard to the faith of that man, and of those that presented him; which shews, that it is by faith, and by an humble recourse to Jesus Christ, that we partake of the effects of his grace. The second, That since Jesus Christ had not only power to heal the fick, but likewise authority to forgive sin; we should look on him as our judge, and by faith and repentance dispose ourselves to receive from him remission of our fins. II. The answer our Lord returned to those that found fault at his eating with publicans and other men of bad life, teaches us, that he came into the world to fave finners, but that the end of his coming was likewise to call them to repentance.' And therefore without amendment and holiness of life we cannot be saved. III. If Jesus Christ did not oblige his disciples to regular, set fasts, like those of John's disciples, it was not because his VOL. III.

doctrine on this point differed from that of his forerunner, or because he condemned fasting, which he recommended both by example and precept, and by calling them to a life of mortification, not of ease and pleasure: but he acted thus for the same reason that he himself did not lead as retired and austere a life as John the baptist; that is, because the nature of his ministry obliged him to go from place to place, and to converse with all forts of people. However, he declares that his disciples should afterwards be called, not only to fasting, but to the severest trials; and that if he did not expose them to those severities while he was with them, it was because they were not able to bear them; this he represents in the comparisons of the old garment, and old wine vessels. IV. The healing of a woman that had been diseased with a flux of blood twelve years, shews, that our Lord cured the most inveterate and incurable distempers; but above all, we ought to observe the humility and faith of that woman, who, not daring to speak to Christ, believed that if she could only touch his garment she should be whole, which accordingly came This example shews us, that our Lord has respect to humility and faith, and that the infallible means of obtaining his favour, is to have recourse to him with profound humility, and an entire confidence, V. The raising of the daughter of Jairus, proves that Jesus Christ had not only power to heal the sick, but that he could even restore life to the dead; which ought fully to convince us that he was fent from God, and confirm us in the belief and expectation of our own refurrection. VI. It is observed at the end of this chapter, that our Saviour feeing the people which followed him in great need of instruction and good guides, took pity on them, and bid his difciples Pray the Lord of the barvest to send labourers into his barvest. These words, which express the great

great love of our Saviour, should inspire us with the same sentiments of compassion and kindness to those that wander out of the way; and stir us up to beseech God that he would send faithful ministers, and bless their labours in the conversion of men, and establishment of his kingdom.

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WE see in this chapter: I. The calling and the names of the twelve apostles. II. The commands which our Lord gave them when he sent them the first time into Judea, to declare that the kingdom of God was come. He foretels them that great troubles should arise in the world on account of the gospel, and that they should be persecuted; but to encourage them, he affured them of the divine protection and affistance, sets before them his own example; exhorts them not to fear men, but God only; and declares what will happen to those who confess or who deny him before men. Lastly, He promises to reward those who shall receive his disciples, and do them good.

#### REFLECTIONS.

JESUS CHRIST chose the apostles to be the witnesses of his life, his preaching, and his miracles, and that they themselves might also go and preach the gospel and work miracles, first among the Jews, and afterwards throughout the world. Now since our Lord made choice of them, and God has been pleased to preserve their names in the sacred writings, their memory ought to be blessed in the church; we ought to imitate their virtues, and submit to the doctrine which they taught, as well by word of mouth as in their writings. II. Jesus Christ forbad his apostles to go at that time among the Gentiles,

tiles, or to the Samaritans, and commanded them to preach the gospel to the Jews only, because the time was not yet come that the apostles should go into all parts of the world. For the fame reason he bade them make no provision for their journey, it being not necessary then, because they were not to go far off, and that their journies were to be but short, the defign of this first mission being only to spread among the Jews, with greater expedition, the news of the coming of the kingdom of God: another reason was, by this means to teach them to depend upon providence. III. In the instructions which our Lord gave his apostles, we learn, that those who preach the gofpel ought to do it with great difinterestedness, prudence, zeal and boldness; without fearing men, or death itself. IV. We learn that his doctrine is received by none but those who have a true heart, and who are of a meek and quiet spirit; that it is to persons of this character that the ministers of the gospel should apply themselves; but when they meet with people who will not hear nor receive them, they should leave them; and that those who thus reject the offers of God's grace, shall be most severely punished. V. In this discourse of our Lord, we have a strong proof of the divinity of the Christian religion, fince the apostles who preached it, and those who first embraced it, were exposed to divers persecutions, and fealed the truth of the goffel and the fincerity of their own testimony, with their blood. VI. We may make here feveral useful reflections, whereof these are the chief: That those who make profession of truth and piety, do often expose themselves to hatred and perfecution, but that God affifts them in a won--derful manner; that we should not fear men, who can only hurt our body, but God alone, who can cast both body and foul into hell; that troubles and divifions often arise in the world on account of the gospel, but

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but that this is entirely owing to the faults of men; that Christians ought to be ready to renounce all that is dearest to them in this world, to follow Fesus Christ And laftly, That our Lord will abundantly recompence the piety and charity of those that shall receive and affift his disciples. All these considerations serve to encourage us stedsastly and openly to profess the Christian religion; to practice all its duties, and particularly to exercise works of charity with pleasure and perfeverance. The product attached by said on the bapain on the wilderness, it was not to the

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importance, de to I. YOHN the baptist having sent two of his dif-J ciples to Jesus Christ, to know of him whether he were the Messiah, our Lord shews that he was so, by working miracles before them. II. He speaks of the nature and excellence of the office of John the baptift. III. He complains of the obstinacy of the Jews, who had made no improvement either by the ministry of John the baptist, or his own; and threatens the cities of Galilee, where he had preached and done miracles, without producing in them repentance and amendment. IV. He praises God that such as were of a meek and humble spirit did receive his doctrine, whilft those who passed in the world for the wifeft and most knowing, rejected it; and he invites all those that were weary and heavy laden to come unto him. if to a stale of to said bigs. Dayl con rew

## REFLECTIONS.

TO make a right use of the reading of this chapter we must observe, I. That if John the baptist fent to inquire of our Lord whether he was the Melfiah, it was not that he doubted of it: this would be a gross reflection upon that holy man, who had constantly declared that Jesus was the Son of God,

and of whom our Lord in the gospel, and even in this chapter, gives us a most extraordinary character. But John the baptist sent his disciples to convince them that Jesus was he whom the Jews expected. II. However, our Lord would not tell them plainly that he was the Messiah, but contented himself to prove by miracles that he was fo, and to warn them not to be offended if he appeared in a very mean condition. III. It was with the same design that he made those who heard him take notice, that when they went to John the baptist in the wilderness, it was not to see a reed shaken with the wind; meaning that they went not upon an occasion of very little importance, or to fee a very inconsiderable person; neither was it a man that was to appear with pomp and splendor, like those we meet with in kings palaces, but that they had seen in the person of John the baptist a great prophet, and even the greatest of prophets, since he was the forerunner of the Messiah; and that nevertheless people opposed him, and the kingdom of God which he preached, ever fince he began to appear. Christ told them all this, to shew that his kingdom was not of this world, and that they ought not to be furprifed if he himself appeared in so low and abject a condition, and even though he were rejected. IV. Our Lord's complaint against the Jews, who had profited neither by the preaching of John the baptist nor his own; objecting that the life of the former was too strict, and that of the latter not strict enough, may convince us that nothing can fatisfy unbelieving and vicious men, who reject all the means God makes use of for their conviction, and even take occasion from thence to harden themselves yet more. V. The threatnings which our Lord denounced against those cities where he had worked miracles, and they did not repent, is a warning to us, that those people who receive the greatest favours from God, having the golpe!

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pel preached among them, and they do not grow better, shall be punished with the utmost severity. VI. Our Saviour's giving thanks to God, because the mean and humble had received his doctrine, whilst it was rejected by the great and wife men of the world. teaches us, that we cannot receive the gospel without an upright, humble and honest heart, without renouncing worldly glory and false wisdom. Since our Saviour does with fo much tenderness invite all fuch as labour and are heavy laden to be his difciples, and affures them that his yoke is easy, and his burden light; let us draw near to him with an humble and lively fense of our own misery, and with an ardent desire of being delivered from it; let us chearfully fubmit to his doctrine and divine precepts; let us be meek and lowly of heart as he was, and then we shall find in him peace of mind and perfect happiness.

#### CHAP. XII. 1-21.

I. OUR Saviour vindicates his disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day. II. He cures a man who had a withered hand, and confounds the Pharisees, who were offended at his having wrought that miracle upon the sabbath day. III. He charges the people not to publish his miracles: whereupon St Matthew quotes a prophecy of Isaiah, describing the prudence, humility and meekness, that should appear in the Messiah's manner of exercising his ministry.

# REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three reflections to be made upon this first part of the twelfth chapter of St Matthew.

I. The first relates to the malice and hypocrify of the Pharisees, who found fault with the disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day, and C 4 because

because their master on the sabbath had healed a man with a withered hand. This is the character of hypocrites, and those that have only a false zeal; they are offended at things in their nature innocent, and even fometimes at fuch as are good, necessary and acceptable to God, whilft they themselves neglect the most essential duties of religion, and especially that of II. What our Lord fays upon this occasion deserves our serious attention, and chiefly these words, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Let us learn from hence, that religion does not barely confift in things external, and in the observation of ceremonies; that indeed those things must not be despised or neglected, and have their use when practised in conformity to his will who has appointed them; but that what God requires above all is, that we should obey his commandments, that we should have true charity, and exercise works of mercy. III. The third reflection may be made upon the behaviour of fesus Christ, who forbids the publishing his miracles; and upon these words of Isaiah: He will not quench the smoaking flax, ner break intirely the bruised reed. Here we see the great prudence of our Lord, who avoided every thing that looked like vanity or oftentation; as likewise his humility, meekness and condescension. We observe particularly, that he discourages no body, that he bears with the weakness of men with great patience; and while there is any good in us, he does not forfake us. This ought, on one hand, to encourage and make us confide in him; and on the other, induce us to imitate him, to be humble, meek and peaceable as he was; to avoid vainglory, and a defire of praise; to shun quarrels and disputes; to exercise great forbearance towards men, to make allowance for, and condescend to their weaknesses: thus we shall be like Jesus Christ, and shew that we are his disciples. CHAP.

## C H A P. XII. 22 -- 50.

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I. CHRIST cures a demoniack; and as the Pharifees attributed that miracle to the power of the devil, our Lord shews how false and impious that accusation was; faying, that the devil would not destroy his own kingdom, and that he could not cast out devils. if he had not a greater power than that of devils; he threatned the Pharisees that their blasphemies should never be pardoned, and that their impious discourse was a proof of the extream wickedness of their hearts. II. Being defired by the Pharifees to fhew them a fign. he refused to do it, referring them to the refurrection, which was to be the last and strongest proof of his divine mission; and he laments the unbelief of the Jews, mentioning upon that account the example of the Ninevites, that of the queen of Sheba, and a parable. III. He declares that his true disciples were as dear to him as his nearest relations.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE here find, I. That the Pharisees, instead of acknowledging the divine power, which appeared to evidently in our Saviour's miracles, faid, he cast out devils by the power of the devil. We see in this instance, that men, blinded by their passions, can refift the most powerful means of conviction. II. Our Lord declares that this blasphemy of the Pharisees, in ascribing to the devil what proceeded from the Spirit of God, should never be forgiven them; because such blasphemy was a sign of their desperate wickedness and incurable obstinacy. We cannot at this day fall into exactly the same sin as these Pharifees did; but we may become extremely guilty by impious and profane thoughts and expressions, by relifting the truth when made known to us, or by quenching

quenching the operations of God's holy Spirit in our hearts. III. From the blasphemy of the Pharisees our Lord took an occasion to declare that good discourses are the figns of a good heart; that wicked discourses proceed from a corrupt heart; and that men must give an account of all the evil words they have spoken; let us learn from hence, that a good man is known by his words, and that the way to regulate them, is to fanctify our heart. IV. Upon the Pharifees defiring Christ to give them a fign, after so many miracles he had already wrought in their fight, we may observe, that unbelievers and those who have a wicked heart, are never fatisfied, and that nothing is clear or strong enough for their conviction. our Lord's refusing to give them such a sign, shews us, that when God has done all that is necessary to overcome the hardness of mens hearts, if it proves ineffectual, he gives them up to their own obstinate temper. V. If the examples of the queen of Sheba, and of the Ninevites, condemned the unbelieving Jews, they will condemn us much more if we do not repent, fince God has been more kind to us than he was to them. VI. By the comparison of the evil spirit which entered again into a man after it had gone out, our Lord shewed the miseries that were to befal the Jews, who, after all he had done to cure their infidelity, fill persisted in it: and it is a warning to us, that those who have been partakers of the grace of God, and make an ill use of it, shall be deprived of it, and shall fall into greater condemnation. Lastly, Our Saviour's declaring that those who do the will of God, are as dear to him as his mother and brethren, teaches us, that holiness and the observation of God's commandments, is the true mark of the disciples of Jesus, and is what admits us into a share of his love; that therefore we ought to apply ourtelves above all things to hear his word, and keep it.

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This likewise shews us, that those who love God, and fear him, are the people to whom we ought chiefly to devote our love and esteem.

#### C H A P. XIII. 1-23.

OUR Lord proposes the parable of the seed, and afterwards explains it in private to his disciples.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IT is proper to observe in general, upon the parables in this chapter, and in feveral other places in the gospel, that our Lord used, in his teaching, to make use of parables and fimilitudes; and that his disciples and the people might remember them the better, he borrowed them from the plainest and most familiar fubjects. These parables were of two kinds. Some were clear, and others fomewhat obscure. These last Jesus Christ made use of, when he was speaking of some points which his hearers were not at that time able to comprehend, and which he did not think fit to declare openly before his death. Such are the parables which foretold his being put to death; the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles in their stead. These truths he reprefented by images and fimilitudes, very plain and eafy to remember, and which in a fhort time would, by the event, be made perfectly clear and intelligible. These parables display the great wisdom of our Lord, prove that he foreknew things to come, fince most of them were prophetic; and afford us, in their completion, a convincing proof of the divinity of the gospel. The design of Jesus Christ in the parable of the feed is, to teach his disciples how the word of God is received by those to whom it is declared. He speaks of four kinds of persons: The first, are those on whom the word makes no impression, and

whose hearts are entirely hardened, which is reprefented by the feed falling on the way fide. cond, are those that receive the word with joy, but embracing the gospel without due reflection, forfake the truth and holiness, as soon as they are exposed to perfecution, or fome other trial: Christ represents the state of such people, by the feed falling in stony places, which indeed fprings up, but having no root, withers away presently. The third fort of hearers, are those who make the word of God of none effect by the love of riches and pleasures, and by the cares of this life, as feed falling among thorns is choked and becometh unfruitful. The last are those who receive it in an honest and good heart, where it produces its fruit and its effect, and who persevere to the end; this is represented by the feed fown in good ground, where it brings forth fruit in abundance. This is the meaning and design of this beautiful parable: and it tends to instruct us in the use we are to make of the gospel when preached to us. What our Saviour said to his disciples when he explained to them this parable, should lead us Christians to acknowledge, how happy we are to be instructed in these divine truths, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and to be more enlightened than all the ancient prophets. Let us make a good use of these advantages, lest we fall into fin, and into the condemnation of those who fee and hear, but will not receive nor understand the truth, and refuse to be converted.

## C H A P. XIII. 24-58.

I. CHRIST proposes several parables; as the parable of the tares, the grain of mustard-seed, and the leaven, of treasure hid in a field, a pearl of great price, and of the net. II. He then exhorts his affeiples to make a right use of his instructions, and after-

afterwards goes to Nazareth, where few believed on

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE parables of the tares, and of the net, have the fame tendency: they fignify, according to the explanation our Saviour himself gives of them, that among those who should profess the gospel, there would be many hypocrites, and that the wicked would be mixed with the good till the end of the world; but that then they shall be separated from each other; that the wicked shall be condemned to everlasting torments, and the righteous received into eternal glory. The use therefore we are to make of these parables is, not to be prejudiced against the gospel, if we fee among Christians some that fall into vice and error; to ftand upon our guard, and avoid the company of wicked men, left we be feduced by them; but, nevertheless, to think always charitably of them; to do our utmost to recover them from their errors; and, as to ourselves, to labour to be of the number of the righteous, that at Christ's second coming, we may be admitted into his kingdom. By the fimilitude of the mustard-seed, and that of leaven, the delign of our Lord was to shew, that though the number of his disciples was then but very small, and his doctrine scarce known in the world, yet it should be foon spread over the whole earth. Christ foretold this in mystical and hidden expressions; not thinking fit, at that time, to declare openly, for fear of giving offence to the Jews, that the Gentiles and all nations should come into the church. Thus these parables are prophetical, and their true import and meaning is manifest in the establishment of Christianity in so many parts of the world, as their divine author had foretold. Let us give thanks to God, that this heavenly doctrine has been extended even to us, and

let us beseech him, that he would more and more establish his kingdom among us, by fanctifying his church; and that he would call to the knowledge thereof those people who are deprived of it, or who have never embraced it, to the end that the whole earth may be full of his knowledge and of his glory, and that the name of God our Father may be gloristed in all places, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The similitudes of the hidden treasure and of the pearl, may convince us, that there is nothing more precious nor more excellent than the gospel, and the advantages that attend it; that the greatest happiness which we can enjoy, is to be possessed of those advantages; and therefore, that we ought gladly to improve every opportunity of procuring them, and even to renounce all that is dearest to us in this world to acquire fuch a precious treasure. Let us carefully retain these divine instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ; let us lay them up in our hearts, that they may continually furnish us with necessary supplies and encouragements to relift temptations, and excite us to the love of God and the practice of good works. We may observe, at the end of this chapter, that the inhabitants of Nazareth believed not on Jesus Christ, though they heard his doctrine, and faw fome of his miracles, because they looked upon him as the fon of a carpenter, and because he was bred among them; which made our Lord tell them, that no prophet was received in his own country. Men are too apt to flight God's favours, and the most valuable blessings he vouchsafes them, because they are common, and may be easily enjoyed; and therefore God, seeing their ingratitude, deprives them of them, as it happened to those of Nazareth, because of their unbelief.

### CHAP. XIV.

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ST Matthew relates three things in this chapter. I. The death of John the baptist. II. Christ's feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes. III. Another miracle of our Lord, who, when his disciples were exposed to a storm, came to them walking upon the sea.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE may make this general reflection upon the death of John the baptist, namely, that God was pleased to suffer that this holy man, who had preached the coming of the kingdom of God, should die a violent death, to convince the Jews that his kingdom was not to be a temporal one; and that they might not be offended when Christ himself should be put to death. It may be observed in the next place, that the cause of John the baptist's death, was the zeal of that prophet in reproving Herod for his criminal correspondence with Herodias; the hatred which that immodest woman had conceived against John on that account, and the complaifance Herod had for her. The reflections that are to be made upon all this are, That the fervants of God ought to rebuke all forts of persons with courage and zeal, though they often draw upon themselves thereby the hatred of wicked men; that impurity, and the love of pleasures, make people commit many fins: And lastly, that great evils may refult from rash oaths, as well as from a falle shame, and the complaifance that we have for wicked people. The miracle of the five loaves has this particularity in it, that it was wrought in the presence of several thousand men, who were witnesses, and shared in the benefit of it; which renders this initacle yet more certain, and proves the wonderful

derful power of our Lord, as well as his great goodness towards the people that followed him. Laftly, The other miracle that Christ did, when he went to his disciples walking upon the sea, is another proof of his unlimited power, and of his love to his difciples: he was pleafed, upon this occasion, to make St Peter walk on the water, to confirm the faith of that apostle and of his brethren; and to assure them that they should afterwards do many extraordinary miracles, and that no danger should terrify them. As to ourselves; we are to make two reflections. First, that if thue Christians are exposed to dangers, God comes feafonably to their affiltance; and fecondly, that as the zeal and faith of St Peter enabled. him at first to walk upon the water, into which he afterwards funk, through fear; fo it is the want of faith only that makes us yield to temptations and dangers, but that we may happily furmount them by faith, and the divine affistance.

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### CHAP. XV.

I. CHRIST vindicates his disciples for not observing the traditions and customs of the Jews,
who washed their hands before their meals: a ceremony which the Jews observed, not for cleanliness
only, but as a part of religion, without which they
thought they must be unclean. Our Lord reproaches
the Pharisees, who were offended at it, with violating, themselves, the divine law by their traditions,
teaching that if any one devoted to God a part of
his estate, wherewith he might have relieved his father or mother, it was not lawful for him, after such
a vow, to apply it to their assistance. II. In the
next place, our Lord shews what it is that desiles a
man, and what does not desile him. III. He heals
the daughter of a Canaanitish woman, and several

fick people; and, IV. Feeds four thousand men with seven loaves and a few fishes.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS discourse between Christ and the Pharisees, furnishes us with the following instructions: I. That hypocrites make religion and piety to confift only in external duties, and oftentimes in fuch as are vain and of very small weight; that they scrupulously observe these things, and condemn those that do not, whilft they themselves violate the most important duties, and the most positive commands of God. II. That the duty of children to their parents is altogether inviolable, that nothing can dispense with it, and that they are particularly obliged to affift them in time of need. III. That vows and oaths, which are rash, and contrary to the divine law, ought not to be kept. IV. That God rejects the worship of those who only honour him with their mouths and lips, but whose hearts are far from him; and that he will be ferved as he has commanded in his word, and not according to the inventions and directions of men. V. That not only external actions defile men, and render them guilty before God, but likewise and chiefly the wicked thoughts and motions of the heart, and defires tending to impurity, to unrighteousness, to pride, to flander, and other fins. This is a doctrine which we must never forget, and which obliges us more particularly to study the internal fanctification and purity of the heart and conscience. VI. We ought to take particular notice of the miracle which Christ wrought in healing the daughter of the Canaanitish woman. He refused at first to cure her, because her mother was a Gentile; his reason for so doing was, not only by that means to excite the zeal of that woman, but likewise because the time was not yet come in which the Gentiles were to be called; and because, during VOL. III.

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his stay upon earth, he wrought miracles only among the Jews. But feeing her perseverance and great humility, he did at last what she defired of him. By this example we may observe, that prayers made with faith, humility and perfeverance, are very acceptable to God, and very powerful; that if God does not hear us at first, it is to try us, to encourage our zeal, and to render us more fensible of our own unworthiness; but if we continue to call upon him fervently, he grants us at last those favours we beg of him. Lastly, This miracle, as well as a great number more which our Lord wrought in healing the fick, in feeding four thousand men with seven loaves and a few fishes, and the like, should lead us to acknowledge the infinite power of Jesus Christ, and his exceeding great love towards men; and ought to excite us to praise God at the hearing of fo many wonders, and to glorify him, as those did who were eye-witnesses of them.

### CHAP. XVI.

HIS chapter has four parts: I. Christ refuses to shew a sign, which the Pharisees desired of him, and reproaches them for their blindness. II. He warns his disciples to take heed of the leaven of the Pharifees. III. Having asked the apostles their opinion concerning him, St Peter confesses that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God; whereupon our Lord makes him very gracious promifes. He foretels his own death; exhorts his disciples to prepare for fufferings; and to engage them fo to do, he represents the worth of the foul, and the great importance of fecuring the falvation of it. He likewife foretels that some of his disciples should not die till his kingdom was established, and he himself come to destroy the Jews: which proved true of those disciples who lived till that time, and particularly of St John. REFLEC-

# REFLECTIONS.

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I. THE first resection we ought to make here, relates to the blindness of the Pharifees, who, notwithstanding Christ had done so many miracles to convince them that the time of the Memah's coming was fulfilled, were still urgent with our Lord to shew them a fign; which he very justly refused to do. When God has given sufficient proofs of the truth of the gospel, if men do not submit to it, they must not expect that God will work continual miracles to overcome their unbelief. II. The meaning of the warning that Christ gave his disciples, to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was, that they should be upon their guard against the doctrine of the Pharifees, who stuck to the outside of religion, and to the traditions; and also against the doctrine of the Sadducees, who denied the refurrection, This is a leffon to and the immortality of the foul. us, to avoid with great care superstition and hypocrify, as well as impious and libertine opinions. II'. It appears from this chapter, that the Jews had a high opinion of Jesus Christ; and particularly, that the apostles were firmly persuaded that he was the Christ the Son of the living God: this is the great and fundamental truth, which ought to be believed and confessed by Christians before the whole world. IV. The promise that Christ made to St Peter, when he faid to him, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; fignifies, that St Peter would be one of his principal ministers in the establishment of his church; and should first preach the gospel both to Jews and Gentiles. V. When we see Christ foretelling his death, and feverely rebuking St Peter, who (being full of the prejudices of the Jews) could not be perfuaded that the Messiah was to die, we must confider. D 2

consider, that our Lord spake in that sharp manner, not because he did not love the apostle, but more fully to convince him, and all the disciples, that it was necessary he should suffer death; and to shew them he was resolved so to do. VI. The last verses of this chapter furnish us with several instructions of great moment, and particularly these three; 1. That the first thing Christ requires of his disciples is; to renounce themselves, and to be prepared for sufferings; and that the defire of preferving our lives should never hinder us from following and obeying him. 12. That the falvation of the foul is the most important thing imaginable; and that it is of no advantage to gain the whole world, if a man lofes his own foul. 3. That the Son of God will come with glory from heaven, to render to all according to their works.

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# CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter contains, I. The history of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. II. The discourse he had with his apostles about the coming of Elias, whom the Jews expected. III. The casting out a devil, which the apostles could not cast out. IV. A miracle wrought by Christ for the payment of the tribute money, given by the Jews for the maintenance of the temple and divine service.

# REFLECTIONS.

1. OUR Lord was pleased to be transfigured a little before his death in the presence of three of his apostles, and to shew them his glory, to strengthen their faith, and to fortify them against the scandal which his death might have given them. The appearing of Moses and Elias, at that time, shews, that Christ was he whose coming the prophets had fore-told, and that he was greater than the most excellent of

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of the prophets. It proves also, that these holy men were not annihilated, and that therefore there is another life referved for good men after this. voice which God caused to be heard from heaven on this occasion, informs us, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, to whom alone we should hearken, and to whom we owe perfect obedience. II. What Christ faid to his disciples, that John the baptist was that Elias, whose coming the prophets had foretold, should convince us of the dignity of the person of John the baptist, and of the authority of his ministry. In the hiftory of the demoniack, whom the apostles could not cure, we find that Christ was invested with a power which nothing could refift, and that he was at the same time full of compassion towards the miferable. We likewise see, that the want of faith in the apostles, was the cause they could not work this miracle; and that, on the contrary, the father of that poor creature did by his faith obtain the cure of his ion. This shews us, how necessary and how efficacious faith is, and how great reason we have to endeavour to be strengthned in it, since it is not less necessary now for our salvation, than it was formerly to enable to perform or procure miracles. The concern which the apostles shewed when Christ foretold his death, is another proof of the weakness of their faith; but we who know that Christ died that he might obtain for us everlasting life, ought to consider his death as the foundation of our hopes and our happiness. Lastly, The miraculous manner by which our Lord paid the tribute, is a remarkable effect of his power: he was also pleased to shew thereby that he did not despise the things that concerned religion; and it is an example for us to submit to public order, and to give, without grudging, some portion of our goods, when the service of God and works of piety are concerned. dems dead HAP.

### CHAP. XVIII.

THE apostles ask our Lord, which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They put this question to him, because they were of the same opinion with the Jews, that the kingdom of the Messiah would be established upon earth, and that there would be great offices and places to be obtained in this kingdom. Our Lord, to undeceive them, places a little child in the midst of them, and exhorts them to become like little children: he advises them not to despise those that believe in him, though they are very mean as to this world. He represents to them, the great sin of giving offence to any of the faithful, and that he calls even the greatest sinners to repentance and salvation. This whole discourse of Jesus Christ tends to deliver the apostles from those prejudices under which they laboured with respect to the kingdom of the Mesfiah, and to inspire them with sentiments of charity and humility. In the second part of this chapter, Christ teaches his disciples how to behave towards their offending brethren, and what the church is to do with those who refuse to submit to its directions, After this he represents, by a parable, the obligation we are under to forgive one another.

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## REFLECTIONS.

THE Saviour of the world teaches us in the first part of this chapter, I. That to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must be extremely humble, and set our hearts no more upon the glories and honours of this world, than little children do. II. That we ought to have a very great regard for the true disciples of Christ, though they should be but low and mean among men; that good people are dear

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dear to God, and therefore we ought to esteem and comfort them, fince he causes his holy angels to watch over them, and will severely punish those who afflict, despise, or offend them. These considerations should likewife encourage the faithful, and inspire them with great confidence. III. Christ fays of offences, that they are a great evil; that they must needs come, and yet that God is not the cause of them; that they proceed intirely from the faults of men; and that he will punish those who are the occasion of them: It follows from hence, that we ought to avoid fin and giving offence with the utmost care; and that we may do it by following our Lord's advice, and avoiding every thing that may be a flumbling-block to ourselves or others. Lastly, What our Lord says here, that there is joy in heaven over one repenting finner, shews, that it is not lawful to despise any body; but on the contrary, that we ought to procure the conversion of finners, and the edification and salvation of all men, as far as in us lies. In the fecond part of this chapter, I. Christ establishes the authority and discipline of the church, and the necessity of reproofs, both private and public; he shews, that all the members of the church ought to fubmit themselves to the discipline established in it, and that such as refuse to hear the church, ought to be looked upon as heathens and publicans; that is to fay, they should not be any longer accounted members of the church, but be cut off from its communion: And he declares that God ratifies and confirms in heaven, what the church does here below agreeable to his intentions. II. The promile that our Lord makes, to be present with, and hear those that are gathered together in his name, teaches us, that the prayers that are offered up in the ipirit of unity and charity, are very acceptable to God, as well as those congregations that are formed to serve and call upon him. Lastly, Christ instructs

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us in the nature and necessity of forgiveness. He explains the nature of it, by faying, that a man ought to pardon even seventy times seven faults; which denotes, that forgiveness ought to be general and unlimited, and that we should be disposed to pardon all persons, and all forts of offences, even such as are continued and repeated; and that at all times, without ever being discouraged. He shews the necessity of such forgiveness, by the parable of the servant to whom his mafter had remitted a very confiderable debt; and who would not pardon a very small sum to one of his fellow fervants. This parable fets before our eyes, first, The infinite goodness of God, who vouchsafes to pardon us his servants and his creatures, though our fins are very great and very numerous: fecondly, The guilt and ingratitude of those who refuse to pardon men who are their equals, and whose offences are very trifling in comparison of the fins we commit against God. Thirdly, The just and terrible punishment of all those who do not pardon heartily, and universally, the offences and injuries they have received.

# CHAP. XIX.

I. THE Pharisees having asked our Lord, whether it was lawful for husbands to put away their wives, as was the practice of the Jews; he answers them, that divorces were contrary to the first institution of marriage, and that they ought not to prevail any longer. II. He blesses little children that were brought unto him. III. A rich young man asking what he must do to be saved, our Saviour, to prove him, whether he was prepared to follow him, told him, to go and sell all that he had. This answer discouraging the young man, he took occasion from hence to declare, that the love of riches would hinder many

many from being faved; and promifes his apostles, who had forsaken all to follow him, that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, should be highly exalted, when his kingdom was established, and be very considerable in the church. He promises also to reward those who should leave all for the sake of the gospel.

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### REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT our Saviour fays at the beginning of this chapter, with respect to the divorces that were in use among the Jews, teaches us in general, that many things which had been tolerated till that time, by reason of the condition of that people, and of their hard and carnal temper, would not be allowed among Christians, because God has given them greater light, and called them to a higher degree of holiness. II. We learn here particularly, that by the divine institution, a man and a woman are inseparably united by the laws of matrimony; that those laws ought to be inviolably observed, and that nothing but adultery can justify a divorce, nor afford a liberty of marrying again. Christ shews us belides, that the gospel calls us to great chastity, and even that there would be Christians that would abfolutely renounce marriage, in order to ferve God more acceptably, and with less interruption labour in promoting Christianity. III. Our Lord's bleffing the little children, which were presented to him, shews us, that fuch children are dear to him, and that he is disposed to receive and bless them; from whence we may infer, that the devoting them to him by prayer and baptism, is very agreeable to his will: he would likewise teach us thereby, that we must be like little children in simplicity, innocence and meeknels, if we would enter into the kingdom of God. IV. The discourse our Lord had with the rich young man

man mentioned in this chapter, teaches us, that to enter into life everlafting, we must keep the commandments of God; and further, be ready to forfake all that we possess in this world when God calls us to it, and when we cannot keep them without being wanting in our duty towards him. The concern which this young man discovered at what Christ said to him, and the declaration of our Saviour, that it would be very hard for rich men to refolve to forfake their goods to come into the church, shews, that riches do commonly fix our hearts upon the world, and that the enjoyment of them is always dangerous. Nevertheless, Christ has taught us, that fuch a renunciation of worldly goods is not an impossible thing; but, on the contrary, both practicable, and even eafy and agreeable too, when we are enlightened by faith, and affifted by the Spirit of God. If all Chriftians are not called, as the apostles were, to forsake all to follow Christ, we ought, at least, to take heed that the good things of this life do not hinder our falvation; we ought not to fet our heart upon them, but should learn to use them without abusing them, and to employ them in works of piety and charity. By this means we shall procure to ourselves a treasure in heaven, and partake of those blessings with which our Lord has promifed to reward, both in this world and the next, such as shall fulfil all these duties.

### CHAP. XX.

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THIS chapter contains, I. The parable of the labourers, who, going to work in the vineyard at different hours of the day, did all of them receive the same wages. II. Christ's foretelling his own death and resurrection. III. His answer to the mother of St James and St John, who desired for her sons

fons the chief place in his kingdom. IV. He gives fight to two blind men.

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### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE defign of our Lord in the parable of the labourers, was to teach his disciples, that the glorious rewards which he had promifed to thole who should for take all for the gospel, did not relate to them only; but that others, who should be called after them, even from among the Gentiles, would partake of the fame rewards as those that were called first; and that, far from being jealous upon this account, they ought to rejoice at it. We must not, however, make a wrong use of this parable, nor conclude from thence, that it will be foon enough to repent at the end of our lives; on the contrary, we should consider, that all those that went into the vineyard at different hours of the day, went thither as foon as the mafter of the vineyard fent them; that those who did not go till the end of the day, did not go fooner because they were not fooner sent; and that this was the reason why they did receive the fame wages as the reft. From whence it appears, that those who obey whensoever God is pleased to call them, shall be faved; but this has no respect to those, who have been called a long while, even from the beginning of their lives, and have refused to obey the call; this very parable proves, that such are without excuse; and that we are all of us indispenfibly obliged to labour with fidelity and perfeverance, and, as foon as God calls, to do his will. II, We may observe in this chapter, that our Lord forewarned his disciples of his being shortly to be put to death, that they might not be furprised when it did happen. III. Christ's answer to the mother of James and John deserves to be considered. This woman imagining, as the rest of the Jews did, that the

the Messiah should reign upon the earth, like the kings of this world, claimed for her two fons the highest posts in his kingdom, as being of our Lord's kindred, and even distinguished from the rest of the apostles upon several occasions. Jesus Christ condemned that request, which shewed, that this woman did not understand the nature of his kingdom; and which might too have occasioned jealousies and divisions among the apostles. He told them, that they ought rather to be humbled and abased, and prepared to drink of the same cup with him, and be baptized with his baptism; that is, to suffer as he should, and not think of being exalted to dignities and preferments, like the great ones of this world; and that he might inspire them with such sentiments, he referred them to his example, faying, that he was come into the world to appear like a fervant, and to fuffer death. These words of our Saviour are a warning to all Christians, to expel from their hearts pride and ambition; not to feek after honour, or affect to be preferred before others; but to live humbly, and bear our cross, according to the example which the Son of God has given us. At the end of this chapter, we have a proof of our Lord's power, as well as of his tender compassion, in giving fight to two blind men.

# C H A P. XXI. 1-22.

I. OUR Lord makes his royal entry into Jerusalem. II. Drives out of the temple those that profaned it. III. Answers the Pharisees, who found fault with the acclamations of the people on his behalf. And, IV. Causes the fig-tree to wither away. ohard of the confliction and to fire all as pening REFLEC-

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TO understand the reason and design of our Saviour's royal entry into Jerusalem, we must observe, that he had avoided till then all appearance of pomp, and being acknowledged publicly for the Messiah; but he thought fit, fix days before his death, to make known to the world that he was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and to be acknowledged for fuch by the people that attended him, and to enter into the temple in the midft of the acclamations of a great multitude. Nevertheless, he did it after a manner that by no means refembled the splendor of worldly princes; but which discovered a great deal of humility and meekness, and which was agreeable to what Zachariah had prophelied, faying, that the Messiah should come meek, and sitting upon an ass; which tended to shew, that he was the great King which God had promifed to his people; but that his kingdom was not of this world. Let us here acknowledge the glory of our Redeemer, and at the same time his great goodness; let us render him our homage, in imitation of the people that followed him to Jerusalem; and fince we know him much better than they did, let us worship him with greater respect and reverence; let us rejoice at his coming, and fay, Bleffed be be that cometh in the name of the Lord. That action of Christ, in driving away those, that bought and fold in the outward courts of the temple things pertaining to the facrifices, was an effect of his great zeal, by which he was pleafed to make the Jews fensible of his divine and heavenly authority. From hence we may learn, not to profane the places in which God is worshipped, either by appearing there irreverently, or by rendering to God a hypocritical service. As for the miracle of the fig-tree that withered away, our Lord did it to

ftrengthen the faith of his disciples, at a time when he was going to fuffer death, and to instruct them in the virtue and efficacy of faith and prayer.

# CHAP. XXI. 23-46.

THIS lesson consists of three parts: I. Christ's answer to the Pharisees, who demanded of him an account of his authority. II. The parable of the two sons whom their father sent into the vineyard. III. The parable of the husbandmen, who, after they had killed their master's servants, did likewise slay his son.

# REFLECTIONS.

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IN E must observe, in the first place, that when the Pharifees asked our Lord, from whence he derived his authority; he would not answer them directly, but was pleased to stop their mouths by asking them, what they thought of the baptism of John; by which he would convince them of a voluntary and malicious ignorance, and at the same time make them sensible that his authority proceeded from God, as well as that of John the baptift, his forerunner. As for us, by whom this authority is perfectly understood, and who know that the doctrine of Jesus Christ, as well as that of John the baptist, is divine, we ought to submit ourselves thereto, lest our incredulity expose us to greater condemnation than the Pharisees. The parable of the two fons, fignifies, that those people who were looked upon as the most corrupt and vicious, had believed the preaching of John the baptist sooner than the Pharisees and the chief men of the Jews, who, professing to be more learned and more holy than other men, ought to have been the first in receiving it. This parable is applicable to finners, who, repenting truly of their fins, return to

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to their duty; and to bad Christians, who, having engaged to ferve God, and to obey him, break their promises, and do not answer to their calling. fimilitude of the husbandmen denotes three things: First, The favours that God had shewn the Jews in choosing them for his people, and in fending to them his fervants at feveral times, and at last his own Son. Secondly, The ingratitude and naughtiness of the Jews, who, instead of acknowledging these favours, had rejected and perfecuted the prophets, and crucified the Lord of life. Thirdly, That God would punish the Jews by destroying them, by taking away his covenant from them, and by calling the Gentiles in their stead; and that Christ, who had been rejected by the chief of the Jews, should be exalted to the highest glory, as had been foretold by the prophecy in the CXVIIIth pfalm. What this parable fignified, is exactly come to pass; the Jews having been destroyed and rejected, the gospel preached to the Gentiles, and the kingdom of God established throughout the world. Thus God deprives of his favour and of his covenant those who do not make a right use of them, nor produce the fruits which he expects from them.

## CHAP. XXII. 1-22.

CHRIST continues the discourses of the preceding chapter, and proposes, I. The parable of the marriage. II. He answers the Pharisees, when they asked him, if it was lawful to pay tribute to the emperor.

## REFLECTIONS.

I. THE meaning of the parable of the marriage is, that the Jews had been first called to salvation by Jesus Christ, but that they would reject

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it, and for that reason would be destroyed; that afterwards God would offer that favour to the Gentiles; that the Gentiles would receive it, and be admitted into his covenant: but that there would be among those that came into the church, hypocrites, who should likewise receive the punishment of their crime. All that our Saviour foretold by this similitude has been fulfilled, the divine vengeance having fallen upon the unbelieving Jews, and the Gentiles having been called and received into the church; which is an incontestable proof of the divinity of the gospel, and the certainty of the promises contained therein. Let us learn from hence, that God is very gracious to men, when he calls them to falvation; and that those who flight and do not improve his kind invitation, have reason to expect the severest vengeance. Let us particularly observe what was faid to the man who fat down to table without a wedding garment, and was cast out. God will not only punish those who openly reject the gospel, but hypocrites also, who calling themselves Christians, and living in the external communion of the church, without being clothed with fincere faith and true holiness, shall not escape the punishment due to their hypocrify. Those who asked our Lord, whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cefar; defigned by this question, either to render him odious to the people, if he faid it was their duty to pay tribute; or to accuse him to Pilate, if he answered, no. Our Lord's reply to this captious question, is an argument of his profound wisdom; and teaches us, that our duty to kings and princes, and our duty towards God, are both indifpenfible, and that they are not opposite to each other; but, on the contrary, are perfectly confiftent: therefore we ought religiously to observe them both, submitting to the highest powers, and paying them their due, in fuch manner, nevertheless, as not to forget that

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# C H A P. XXII. 23-46.

I. THE Sadduces, who denied the resurrection of the dead, having proposed to Christ the case of a woman that had seven husbands, and in order to consound him, having asked which of the seven she would belong to after the resurrection; our Lord answers, that there would be no such thing as marrying in the life to come, and proves from the scriptures, that the dead should rise again. II. He answers a question put to him by a scribe, about the greatest commandment of the law. III. He asks the Pharisees, How the Messiah was both the son of David and his Lord? which they could not answer, and he did not think sit to explain to them.

### REFLECTIONS.

IN Christ's discourse with the Sadduces about the refurrection, we ought to admire his divine wifdom, and, at the fame time, the strength and evidence with which he confounds them, and proves that the dead shall rise again. This passage of the gospel teaches us clearly two things: First, That nothing is more certain than the refurrection of the dead; and that those who have been acceptable to God in their life-time, as the patriarchs, are not annihilated by death. This doctrine is the support of our faith and hope. Secondly, What shall be the flate of the faints in glory: Of which Christ has told us, that the bands of flesh and blood shall not subsist in the life to come, and that the bleffed will not be any more subject to the wants of the body and necessities of this life, but will be like the angels of This confideration should induce us to be-E VOL. III.

come spiritual men here, and live in great purity, because without this we cannot attain at length to a happy refurrection. II. Christ inculcates here another very important doctrine; which is, that the great commandment of the law is, To love God with all our beart, and our neighbour as ourselves: and fince this is the fum of all religion, let it be our great care to fix in our hearts this true love of God, and of all men. III. With respect to the question which Christ put to the Pharisees, how the Messiah could be at the same time the son of David, and his Lord; it must be observed, that he only proposed it to them, to make them fensible of their ignorance, particularly in relation to the person of the Messiah, and to the nature of his kingdom; but that he would not explain it to them, because they would not have comprehended nor believed what he should have faid to them; and likewise because it was not convenient to speak openly of the glory and dignity of his perfon at that time: but this question is very plain and obvious to us, who know that Jefus Christ was the fon of David, as man, fince he was descended from that king; but that he is David's Lord, and the Lord of all men, as he is the Son of God; God having placed him at his right hand, as king of the world, and of the church, with fovereign authority over all things: let us therefore glory in our obedience and subjection to him.

#### XXIII. CHAP.

UR Lord speaks against the Pharisees and scribes. He owns all that is good and lawful in their doctrine, and in their ministry, but accuses them of hypocrify, and affecting a great appearance of holiness. He says, they were filled with pride; that they rejected the gospel themselves, and hindered others

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from receiving it: he represents them as a set of covetous, wicked wretches, who made religion and prayer subservient to their interest. He takes notice, that their doctrine about oaths was a proof of their impiety and detestable avarice; forasmuch as they taught, that if a man fwore by the gold, and by the gifts that were offered in the temple and upon the altar, the obligation upon his conscience was stronger than if he had fworn by the altar, or by the temple itself. He adds, that besides the tithes prescribed by the law, they gave tithes of herbs, and every thing that grew, which God had not commanded; and that, notwithstanding this apparent strictness, they neglected duties of much greater importance. further adds, that though their external appearance was holy, their hearts were very corrupt; that they adorned the sepulchres of the prophets, and at the fame time persecuted the servants of God unto death. Lastly, He declares, that they drew upon themselves, and the whole nation, the most dreadful judgments of God; and laments, in the most tender manner, the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be brought to pass in a few years.

### REFLECTIONS.

T may be observed upon this chapter in general, first, that our Lord drawing near his death, did, with a holy liberty, and with an authority nothing less than divine, rebuke the scribes and Pharisees for their wickedness and hypocrify; it being very necesfary he should discover to the people what they were. Secondly, The repeated curses denounced in this discourse against hypocrites, should make us look upon hypocrify as a most odious fin, especially in those who make great professions of piety and zeal. particular reflections we are to make upon this chapter, are, I. That when the ministers of religion teach

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found dostrine but lead ill lives, we must not imitate their actions, but ought, nevertheless, to hear and obey them when they preach the truth. II. That all the disciples of Jesus Christ, and particularly those to whom the care of the church is intrusted, ought to be wholly free from hypocrify, ambition and covetousness, if they would not resemble those Pharifees whom our Lord curfed. III. That they themselves ought first to walk in the way that leads to heaven, and then make others walk in the same path, by contributing their utmost to the conversion of sinners, and to the edification of all men. IV. The censure which Christ passes upon the doctrine of the Pharifees, and upon the article of fwearing, shews, that an oath ought to be held in great reverence, fince we thereby appeal to God himself; that perjury, and the breach of vows, is a great sin. V. We here observe, that one of those tokens whereby hypocrites are known, is their affecting an outward holiness, being nice and scrupulous in things of little consequence, and neglecting the most important matters of religion; fuch as faith, mercy, and obedience to God's commands. Therefore we ought chiefly to apply ourselves to the observation of those most effential duties, to purify our hearts, and to fettle in them faith and a true fear of God. Nevertheless, we are likewise taught by our Saviour, that although external duties be not the most necessary, yet we must not omit nor despise them; when he says, these things ought you to have done, and not leave the other The threatnings which Christ denounces against the Jews, who, after having murdered the prophets, would put him to death likewife, shews, that God juftly destroyed them, and that the ingratitude of fuch as reject the word of God and of his fervants, will not remain unpunished. Laftly, The tenderness with which our Saviour deplores the ruin of

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of the Jews, that had made fuch ill returns to his goodness, proves very clearly that God only desires the salvation of men; and that if there are any who perish, it is wholly through their own fault.

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### CHAP. XXIV.

UR Lord foretels the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem; and being asked by his disciples. when it would happen, and what figns should precede that destruction, and the end of the world, answers them, that there should arise false christs: and falle prophets; that there would be wars, famine, and calamities of all kinds; that his disciples would be perfecuted, and that the gospel would be preached in feveral parts of the world. He fays, moreover, that when the abomination of defolation should come into the holy place, that is, when the idolators should enter Judea, and besiege Jerusalem and the temple, this would be a fign that its destruction was near; and that then people should retire and flee away from the miseries which would fall at that time upon the Jewish nation. To this our Lord adds, that the fun and the stars should be darkened; which are figurative expressions taken from the prophets, denoting the great revolutions that would happen in the world, and in the state of the Jews, and the dreadful marks of God's wrath that would be feen He fays also, that the fign of the son of man should appear; which signifies, that Christ would manifest, in an illustrious and transcendent manner, by destroying the Jews and establishing his kingdom, that he was the Son of God. He declares, that all thefe things should come to pass before that generation was passed away; that the exact time of his coming should be known to none, but should come fuddenly upon them, as the flood did upon men in E 3 the

the days of Noab. Lastly, He exhorts his disciples to watch, and be always ready, left he should come upon them unawares.

### REFLECTIONS.

IN E must consider, in the first place, that all that Christ foretold here, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, came to pass soon after his ascension. For there did arise several false messiahs and several impostors, who, under the pretence of religious zeal, feduced the Jews, and stirred up feditions through all Judea. There were likewise wars, in which an infinite number of the Jews were destroyed, and abundance of them carried off by famine and pestilence; the apostles and Christians were persecuted; the gospel was preached and established in several countries; the Romans entered Judea, belieged Jerusalem, and demolished it with its temple; and the Christians, making use of our Savjour's warning, retired from that city and were faved, whilft the Jews perished miserably. All this happened, as Jesus Christ had expressly declared it would, before that generation of men was gone, about forty years after his death: which is an unanswerable proof of the truth and divinity of these predictions, which were made known to the world long before the destruction of Jerusalem. We see, in the destruction of Jerusalem, a remarkable instance of the judgments of God upon unbelievers, as well as of his protection of the faithful. Finally, The exact completion of what our Lord foretold of the destruction of Jerufalem, ought to convince us, that what he has fo expressly said of the end of the world, and of the final destruction of the wicked, will be fulfiled in The time of this fecond coming like manner. is concealed from us, as well as that of our own death, that we might be continually prepared for it, and

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it, nd and that terrible day may not surprise us, as the deluge did mankind in the time of Noah, nor as the Jews were surprised at the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ shews us himself, that this is the use we are to make of his whole discourse, by the similitude of the good and bad servant; and by the exhortation denoting the end of that similitude, and of all that is contained in this chapter: Watch therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come.

### CHAP. XXV.

OUR Lord, after speaking in the foregoing chapter of his coming, and exhorting his disciples to watchfulness, continues his discourse, and shews, I. By the parable of the ten virgins; and, II. By that of the talents, the necessity of watching, and of preparing for his coming. He afterwards speaks of the last judgment.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE parable of the virgins is taken from the practice of the Jews at their weddings, at which their maidens were used to meet the bridegroom and bride with lighted lamps: and by this parable Christ gave his disciples to understand, that they were continually to expect and be prepared for his coming. The wife virgins represent the true believers, that live in faith, and in the practice of their duty, and in the expectation of our Lord's coming; and the foolish virgins represent the false christians, who neglect their duty. The coming of the bridegroom, at midnight, and the condition the wife and foolish virgins were in, fignifies, that Christ will come to judge the world when he is least expected; and that then those that shall be found ready will be filled with joy, and with a holy confidence, and shall enter with E 4

him into his glory; whilft, on the other hand, those who have neglected to prepare themselves, shall have for their portion nothing but mifery and despair, and will in vain attempt to be admitted to the joys of the righteous. We may observe three things upon the parable of the talents: First, That God calls men to ferve him, and that he grants his grace and his gifts to some more, to others less; that each of them may employ them according to his calling, and the measure he has received, to the glory of God and falvation of men. Secondly, That some, like the faithful fervants, make a good use of these gifts and graces; and that others render them useless by their negligence. Thirdly, That God will oblige both to render an account of their behaviour; that he will praise and reward the fidelity of those that have employed his gifts in promoting his glory, and that those who have abused them, shall be punished for their unbelief. Our Lord expressly declares, that these last will be without excuse, because God is not a hard and unjust master, who would reap where he has not fowed; that is, he never requires of men more than they are able to perform. Thus, by each of these parables, Christ teaches us after what manner he will judge those men, to whom he has given the knowledge of himself: he warns us to adhere to our duty with constancy, and that each of us serve him in our respective vocations. There are four things principally to be observed in the description of the fast judgment. The first is, that Jesus Christ will descend from heaven with glory, and that it is he who shall judge the world. Secondly, That all men shall appear before him, and all be judged by him, without exception. The third is, That he will judge them by their works, and that he will chiefly have respect to works of charity, and to the good that is done to his members; because such works are proofs and

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and effects of faith, and of the love we have for him. The fourth thing is, that he will separate the good from the wicked, by receiving the good into the kingdom of heaven, and cafting the wicked into eternal torments. Since Christ has so expressly warned us of all these things, and fince we know that we must all appear before his tribunal, to receive according to the good or evil we have done, let us behave ourselves with godliness and fear during the time of our abode in this world; let us adhere to the practice of good works, and above all, to those of mercy and charity; that at the day of the last and glorious appearance of the Son of God, we may be free from that terror and despair which will then fall upon the wicked, and appear before him with joy and confidence, and be of the number of those to whom he shall fay; Come; ye bleffed of my Father, inberit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

# C H A P. XXVI. 1-35.

HERE begins the history of our Saviour's paffion; I. The priests form a resolution to put
Christ to death. II. A woman anoints our Lord with
a precious oil. III. Judas bargains with the priests
to deliver up his master to them. And, IV. Christ
celebrates the passover, and during that repast, he
makes mention of the treachery of Judas; institutes
the holy supper, and foretels that St Peter should
deny him.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE first reflection we have to make here, relates to the time of our Lord's passion; I. Jesus knowing he was to be crucified at the feast of the passover, repaired to Jerusalem at that time; and though

though the priefts did not intend to put him to death during that feftival, yet it was the will of God that he should then die, because it was the time of offering up the paschal lamb, which was the type of our Lord's sacrifice; and that the Jews, who came from all parts upon that account, might be witnesses of his death. II. The example of that woman, who anointed him with a precious perfume, should excite us to honour our Lord in the best manner we are able: and what our Lord fays in defence of this action, shews us, that he accepts of what we do to testify our love and our respect for him: this ought likewise to induce us to judge favourably of other mens actions, especially when proceeding from a good principle; and never neglect to affift those that are in need and necessity. III. The agreement of Judas with the priefts, is a proof what crimes, and what obdurateness avarice will lead men into, and how careful we ought to be, that that passion do not steal into and root itself in our IV. Let it be observed, that Jesus Christ foretold the treachery of Judas, to make him sensible his defign was known to him, and that his disciples might confess, that nothing could befal him but what he had foreseen, and was contented to expose himself to. V. What especially deserves our attention in this chapter, is the Lord's supper, which our Saviour, just before his crucifixion, instituted to be a memorial of his death and fufferings to the end of the world: this obliges us to hold that facrament in great reverence, and to celebrate it in a manner conformable to the defign of our bleffed Redeemer. VI. Christ's prediction, that St Peter should deny him, proves, that our Lord fees the heart, and knows things to come; and what he faid to that apostle, who answered him with so much affurance, should teach us, never to presume upon our own strength, but

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but to distrust ourselves, and be continually upon our guard against temptation.

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# C H A P. XXVI. 36-75.

IN this part of the history of the passion, we see, I. What our Lord suffered in the garden. II. How he was taken by Judas. III. What happened when he appeared before the council, and was condemned. IV. St Peter's fall and repentance.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE ought most seriously to reflect upon what Christ suffered in the garden, and especially the extream forrow and terrors which he then felt. It was the will of God that he should undergo these things, that it might appear he died for the fins of mankind, and was subject to all the innocent infirmities of our nature. And we ought to judge, by the condition to which our Saviour was then reduced, how great the horror of fin is, and how dreadful the punishments are which wicked men will one day fuffer. Those humble and fervent prayers which Christ made to God in his agony, teach us to pray with perseverance and submission, when we are in affliction. The refignation of our Lord to the will of his Father, is a proof of his perfect obedience to him, and of his love towards us; and ought to be a pattern to us, in what condition foever he thinks fit to place us. The warning that Christ gave his apostles to watch and pray, lest they should fink under that great temptation to which they were going to be exposed, is a most wholsome advice, ferving to teach us, that watchfulness and prayer are the principal means to relift temptation, and that we are overcome by it when we neglect those

In the manner in which Judas betrayed our Lord, we may see on one hand the treachery of that wretched disciple, and on the other, the readiness and chearfulness with which Christ exposed himself to death. The action of St Peter, who smote with his fword one of those who came to apprehend Christ, is to be confidered as the effect of a rash zeal; and the rebuke that our Saviour gave that apostle, is a lesson to us never to avenge our ourselves, nor proceed to violence upon any occasion whatever. That which is to be observed upon the appearance of Christ before the council of the Jews is, I. That notwithstanding all the endeavours of the Jews to find out falle witnesses, and some pretended reason for condemning him, he could not be convicted of any crime, and was only condemned for acknowledging himfelf to be the Son of God. In this we discover the malice and injustice of the Jews, and the entire innocence of our Saviour. II. The great patience with which he fuffered all the injuries and affronts, and all the unjust treatment which he received from them, should cause us to remember what St Peter faid upon this occasion: That Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow bis fleps, 1 Peter ii. 21. III. What our Lord faid to the Jews, when they condemned him to death, namely, that they should see him coming in the clouds of heaven, deferves a particular attention. Here we may observe Jesus Christ speaking as a king, and as the Son of God, at the very time of his condemnation: and the establishment of his kingdom, as well as the destruction of the Jews, did foon after verify what he had foretold upon that occasion. IV. The fall of St Peter, who, after having been warned by our Lord, and after having protested that he would never renounce him, did yet deny him three times, even with imprecations and oaths,

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is a fad instance of human inconstancy and frailty. By which we see, that even those who have good intentions, may greatly fall when they are not tortified against temptation; and that to secure ourselves from it, it behoves us to stand upon our guard and to suspect ourselves; to pray without ceasing; and to shun the places, and avoid the occasions that may draw us into sin. But we must likewise consider, that if the fall of St Peter was great, his repentance was speedy, and that he bitterly bewailed his fault. So we, when we happen to fall, ought to rise quickly, and atone for our sin by the tears of a sincere repentance, and by a true amendment of our lives.

### C H A P. XXVII. 1-26.

I. JUDAS feeing that Christ was condemned, acknowledged his crime, and laid violent hands upon himself. II. Jesus appeared before Pilate, the governor of Jerusalem, who, after having made several attempts to deliver him, and to pacify the Jews, did at last pronounce the sentence of his condemnation.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE remorfe of conscience Judas selt, when he saw they were going to put Jesus to death, the consession he made of his crime, and his tragical end, shew the innocence of our Lord, and how unjustly he was condemned. It likewise discovers the state of a guilty conscience, and the horror of that remorfe and despair wherewith the wicked are tormented when they become sensible of their crimes, and are pursued by divine vengeance. The use to which the Jews put the money that Judas returned them, served to perpetuate the memory of this event, as it was a proof of the injustice which they had

committed, and as it was a plain accomplishment of the prophecy of Zachariah. As to what happened before Pilate, it must be observed, that Christ owned in his presence, as he had already done before the council, that he was the Messiah. Thus, in imitation of our Lord, we ought to confess the truth, even at the peril of our lives, as often as we are called to it. We fee, moreover, in this history, the rage of the Jews, which nothing was capable of mollifying, and how they preferred a murderer and a feditious person before Jesus Christ; the innocence of our Lord may also be there observed, fince it was acknowledged by Pilate himself; and particularly the iniquity of that judge, who, after a long opposition, did yield to his death at last, notwithstanding the warning he received from his wife; and though he was persuaded that he was condemning an innocent man. We have therefore an example in Pilate of those that fin against light, and that sacrifice their duty and their conscience to fear, complaisance and interest; as well as of those that think themselves guiltless when they are committing the greatest crimes, and that throw upon others the faults which they themselves are the authors of. This teaches us to adhere always inviolably to our duty, and to purfue with courage and steadiness the motions of our own conscience, without suffering any consideration whatever to turn us aside. Lastly, We ought most seriously to reflect upon these words of the Jews, when our Lord was condemned, His blood be on us, and on our children. Both they and their posterity have found the effects of this imprecation which they made against themselves; God having revenged the death of his Son upon that guilty nation, by the deftruction of their city, and by that miserable condition in which they have remained ever fince.

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# C H A P. XXVII. 27-66.

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ST Matthew here relates, I. The crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. II. The wonderful things that then happened. III. His burial.

### REFLECTIONS.

AFTER having heard the relation of our Saviour's passion, and feen what contempt and pain he was exposed to before his crucifixion, and whilft he was upon the cross; we ought to consider, that he fuffered all these things for the expiation of our fins, and to confirm, by his death, the promises he has made us of life everlasting. The use we are to make of this important passage of the gospel, is to consider that death as the wonderful means whereby God has faved us; to praise his mercy in delivering up his Son to death, and the love of our gracious Saviour in giving himself for us, and to love him as he has loved us. The fufferings of Christ ought likewise to make us renounce fin, since he died to deltroy it; and teach us also to suffer, and to bear our cross with patience. The several prodigies that happened at his death, betoken the horror of the crime the Jews had then committed in crucifying him, and shew, that Jesus Christ was the Son of The rending of the vail of the temple, visibly denotes, that the worship of the Jews was drawing to an end, and their temple going to be destroyed, and that heaven should thenceforwards be open to men. The opening of the sepulchres of those who rose with our Lord, denoted, that Jesus should come out of his tomb, and that the dead should rife at the last day, by the efficacy of his death and refurrection. With respect to the burial of our Lord, we may confider, that he was interred, that people might be more

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more fully satisfied that he was really dead; and God was pleased he should be put into a sepulchre where none had yet lain, to shew, that it was he himself that arose from thence. The circumstances of his burial, as well as those of his passion, are the completion of several prophecies. And the belief that Christ was buried, is very proper to remove the horror which we should otherwise have conceived of our own death and burial, and to fill us with the hope of the resurrection and of a better life. Lastly, The Jews causing our Lord's sepulchre to be so strictly closed and watched, is a thing worthy our notice, because, contrary to their own intentions, they surnish us thereby with undeniable proofs of his resurrection.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

THIS last chapter of the gospel of St Matthew contains, I. A short account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. II. What the Jews did to persuade the people that his disciples had taken away his body. III. Christ's appearing to the apostles, and the directions he gave them before he ascended into heaven.

### REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three principal reflections to be made upon the refurrection of Jesus Christ. I. That God's sending his angels to take him out of the sepulchre, as he had foretold, is an undeniable proof that he is the Son of God. II. That that resurrection was a certain fact, attested by angels, and by the women that saw our Saviour, and afterwards by the apostles, and by a great number of other persons. III. And above all, that the resurrection is the soundation of our salvation, and of all our hopes, since we

we are thereby fully affured, that we are reconciled to God, and that we shall rise again at the last day. What the chief men among the Jews did to perfuade the people that Christ's disciples had taken away his body, discovers the extreme malice and invincible obstinacy of his enemies: but all their precautions were vain, and what they feared did not fail to happen: thus God confounds the wicked in their defigns, and makes truth triumph over all opposition. Laftly, What our Saviour faid to his apostles, of the fupreme power to which he was going to be exalted, the orders he gave them to preach and to baptife, and the promise he made of being with them to the end of the world, ought all to be feriously considered. Christ spoke then to his disciples, as Lord of heaven and earth, and shewed plainly that his doctrine was going to be spread over all the earth, that a great many people would embrace it and be baptifed, and that his church should subsist for ever. The speedy and wonderful fuccess of the preaching of the apostles, and the establishment of the Christian religion. proved afterwards, and does still prove the truth of these last words of our Lord; and they are so many powerful motives to induce us to believe in him, to confess the divinity of his doctrine, and to do all he has commanded us; particularly, to look upon baptism as a facred institution of our Saviour, and to reverence that holy ceremony by which we are confecrated to the Father, Son, and holy Ghost.

The End of the Gospel according to St MATTHEW.

John the baptiff's preaching, the

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and the eliablithment of the This Gospel was writ some time after that of St Matthew, it is thought, about ten years after Christ's ascension, by St Mark, under the inspection of the . apostle St Peter. al le op and le vinivib ed 23 and has coestnanded us, particularly, to look upon ban

# tion a stacred interior of our Savious, and to

IN this chapter, St Mark gives a short account of John the baptist's preaching, the baptism of Jesus Christ, his temptation, his first preaching in Galilee, and the calling of his apostles. He afterwards relates the cure of a man poffeffed with an unclean spirit, of St Peter's mother in law, and of several other fick and diseased, and lastly of a leper.

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## REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

CT Mark shews us in the beginning of his gospel, I. That John the baptist was sent, as had been foretold of him by the prophets, to declare the manifestation of the kingdom of God, by preaching repentance, by baptifing those that confessed their fins, and by warning the people that the Messiah was going to appear. God was pleased by the ministry of John to prepare the Jews for the reception of Jesus Christ, and to teach them that the kingdom of the Messiah would be a spiritual kingdom, and that he came to establish holiness in the world, and to turn men to God; fo that we ought to look upon repentance and holiness of life, as the design of our Lord's coming: and this is what he himself has taught us, having begun his ministry by preaching repentance, as John the baptist his forerunner had done; faying, Repent ye, and believe the gospel. II. What happened at the baptism of Jesus Christ, viz. the descending of the holy Ghoft, and the voice which God caused to be heard from heaven, tended to convince John the baptist, and the people, that Jesus was the Son of God, whose doctrine all men were to receive with obedience and faith. It was likewife to thew, that he was really the Son of God, and to convince the devil of this truth, that God was pleased to suffer him to be tempted in the defart. III. The choice which our Lord made of some fishermen to be his apostles, shews that he came not to establish a temporal and worldly kingdom, fince those people had nothing to diftinguish themselves in this world: this likewise proves, that the wonderful effects of their ministry proceeded not from them, but that the whole glory is to be attributed to God alone. IV. Our Lord foon made himself known by miracles, which manifested not only his infinite power, but his

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great goodness also. This method providence made choice of to prove to the Jews that he was fent from God, and that his doctrine was true and divine; and to convince men still more of this truth, was the reason why he worked his miracles, commonly, in favour only of fuch who believed that he was able to do them, and who defired it of him. He nevertheless took all the care he could, that those miracles should not make too great a noise; this he did upon prudential reasons, left those among the Jews that owned him for the Messiah, should have raised commotions and tumults in order to declare him king, according to their notion at that time, that the Messiah should be a temporal king; which might have occafioned some disturbance, and engaged the Romans to oppose the disciples of Christ. Lastly, When we read the account of all these miracles, we should reflect, that fince our Saviour is not less powerful, nor less gracious now, than he was when upon earth, he will grant us what is necessary to the healing or faving of our fouls, more certainly than he formerly granted a cure to the diseases of the body.

### CHAP.

I. CHRIST cures a paralytical person. II. Calls Levi, which is St Matthew, to the office of an apostle. III. He gives his reasons why he eat with finners, and why he did not oblige his disciples to observe regular fasts, like those of John the baptift, and of the Pharifees. IV. He returns an answer to the Pharifees, who blamed his apostles for plucking the ears of corn upon the fabbath day.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE first thing to be observed in the cure of the man that had the palfy is, the faith of those who brought the man to Jesus; who, when they faw they

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they could not come near our Lord, let the fick man down through the roof of the house before Jesus; who feeing this furprifing instance of their faith, wrought for them the miracle which they believed he was able to perform. From whence it appears, how agreeable faith is to our Saviour, and how efficacious in obtaining from him the mercies we stand in need of. It appears also from hence, that besides the power of healing diftempers, Christ had also an authority to forgive fins, which obliges us to confider him, not only as a prophet fent from God, but likewife as our judge, from whom we may expect health to our fouls, and pardon of our offences through faith and repentance. II. We learn from this chapter, that our Lord came into the world to call finners to repentance, which he gave us to understand by eating with publicans, and fuch other persons as the Jews looked upon to be great finners. This doctrine ought to fill us with confidence, and at the fame time make us acknowledge, that it is absolutely necessary to repent and amend our lives, if we would be faved. III. When it is faid, that Christ did not oblige his disciples to regular fasts, such as those observed by the disciples of John the baptist, it must be understood in this manner, namely, that our Lord had particular reasons for not confining his disciples at that time to those kinds of fasts; because both he and his disciples were continually moving from place to place, and converfing with all kinds of people. He declared however, that his disciples should be called, after he was taken from them, not only to fastings but to great sufferings; and that if they were not yet exposed to them, it was because they were not able to bear them; just as a piece of new cloth would not fuit with an old garment, and new wine would break old bottles. Therefore we must not conclude from this passage of the gospel, that

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our Saviour condemned fasting and mortification; on the contrary, this doctrine evidently supposes, that our Lord calls his disciples to a mortified life, and to bear their cross. IV. We see, lastly, that Christ justifies the action of his disciples, who, being very hungry, plucked the ears of corn upon the sabbath day, upon which occasion he quoted what David did in a like case. This teaches us, that in extreme necessity, and when the external duties of religion cannot be observed without great inconvenience, they may be dispensed with; provided it be not out of contempt, and that we never violate the essentials of religion; it being nothing but hypocrisy and superstition, like that of the Pharisees, to act otherwise.

# at our Lord can eding the world to call finners to

THE evangelist relates, I. The healing of a man whose hand was withered, and of several other diseased persons. II. The calling of the twelve apostles. III. What Christ said to the Pharisees, who ascribed his miracles to the power of the devil. IV. His declaration, that his true disciples were as dear to him as his own kindred.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE may still observe the great goodness and fovereign power of our Lord, in the several miracles mentioned in this chapter, which is very proper to confirm our faith, and to fill us with confidence in him. We see, in particular, in the cure wrought upon the man whose hand was withered, the great blindness and malice of the Pharisees, who were offended at Christ's doing this upon the sabbath day. What he says to those enemies of his doctrine, and the just indignation he expressed, show much he is offended when we resist the truth, and,

and, under a pretence of religion, condemn works of piety and charity. II. The choice our Lord made of the twelve apostles to be with him, and the power he gave them to preach the gospel, and to work miracles, like those done by himself, must be looked upon as an effect of his great wisdom, as well as of his goodness towards all men, fince he was afterwards to make use of the ministry of those apostles, to cause the gospel to be preached throughout the world. III. The third reflection relates to the fin of the Pharifees, whom Christ accuses of blaspheming against the holy Ghoft. St Mark clearly explains wherein this blasphemy consisted; which was, that seeing our Lord cast out devils, they said he did these miracles by the power of the devil; which was a most heinous instance of biafphemy against the holy Ghost, and the mark of an irrecoverable state of wickedness. This example proves, that when once men have abandoned themselves to their prejudices and passions, they are hardened against all that can be offered to them, though never fo clear, and never fo ftrong; and that instead of yielding to evidence, they become yet more wicked. IV. Our Lord's declaring that he loved his true disciples as much as his nearest relations, teaches us, that the furest means of being loved by him, is to fet ourselves to hear his word, and to do his will; and that we likewife, in imitation of him, ought particularly to cherish those persons that fear God, and to esteem them above all others.

### CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter contains, I. The parable of the feed, and its explanation. II. Another parable feed, and its explanation. II. Another parable of feed cast into the earth, and at length producing its fruit. III. The parable of the grain of mustard. IV. Christ's miracle in laying the storm.

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THE explanation which Jesus Christ himself has given of the similitude of the seed, sets it in a clear light, and expresses the meaning and use of it. This is what the Saviour of the world has thought fit to teach us by it: the feed that fell upon the way, represents those who hear the gospel, but do not receive it, nor are affected with it. The feed that fell upon rocky places, denotes those who receive the word of God only for a time, but in perfecution and temptation for sake Christ. The seed that fell among thorns, and was thereby choked, is the image of those in whom the word would produce fruit, if their heart were not taken up with the love of the riches and pleasures of the world, and with the cares of this life. And the feed fown in good ground, represents those who have a good and well-disposed heart, and in whom the gospel produces good fruit. Now it is our duty to examine ourselves, and to try whether we are of the number of those hardened ones, upon whom the word of God makes no impression; or of those inconstant and cowardly ones, who, after having been affected, do not persevere; or of those carnal or worldly ones, in whom the word is rendered unprofitable, by the love of the riches and pleafures of this life; or, lattly, of those faithful hearers, who bring forth in abundance the fruit which God expects from them. Let these divine instructions take root in our heart, and, as Christ himself has exhorted us, let us take heed how we receive them, always remembering, that God gives more light and greater gifts to those that make a right use of them; but that he takes them away from fuch as abuse them, or that do not improve them. The design of our Lord in the similitude of the feed springing up, and growing by little and little; and in the other, of

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of a grain of mustard, was to shew, that notwithflanding there was no great appearance at that time that his doctrine should make any considerable progress, by reason of his own low estate, and the small number of those who received his doctrine, yet it would foon be fpread throughout the whole earth, Christ expressed these things in parables, because he would not then declare openly that his gospel was to be preached to other nations, for fear of shocking and giving offence to the Jews: but these parables became very obvious and plain afterwards, by the establishment of the Christian religion, so that they do now furnish us with invincible proofs of the truth of the gospel. In the history of the miracle which our Saviour wrought by calming a tempest, we may observe the great concern of the apostles, who were afraid of perishing, though Jesus was in the midst of them; which shewed that their faith was still weak, as he himself reproached them. We may likewise discover therein his goodness towards them, and that wonderful power which turned their fear into aftonishment and admiration. The children of God are expoled to many dangers, to many fears and infirmities, but he helpeth them, and after he has tried them by affliction, gives such proofs of his goodness in their deliverance, as may strengthen their faith, and fill them with joy and consolation.

### CHAP. V.

I. THE evangelist relates a most remarkable miracle which our Saviour wrought, by delivering a man possessed with a legion of devils. II. The healing of a woman that had an issue of blood, and the raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead.

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THE history of the possessed with devils, does very much deferve our attention. We may obt serve here a most evident proof of the power which the devils exercised at that time, by God's permission, over mankind; but we fee likewife, that Christ had a fovereign authority over them; that he came to destroy the kingdom of the devil, and that he was always ready to display his power in favour of such as wanted his affiftance. Our Lord, after having delivered this demoniack, gave the devils leave to enter into the swine, and to hurry them headlong into the fea, that it might appear that this man was really possessed, and to prove the truth and greatness of the miracle which he had wrought; it was likewife to shew, that the devils could do nothing but by his permission; and as a trial and a chastisement of the inhabitants of those parts, who, as the history informs us, would not bear our Saviour among them. This obliges us to thank God, that fince the coming of Jesus Christ, the devil has not the same power as he had formerly over mankind; and to confider, that as fad and deplorable as the condition of this demoniack was, yet it was by no means fo dreadful as that of finners who abandon themselves to evil, and who are flaves to the devil and their own passions; fince this man did not fall into this forrowful condition by his own fault, and that besides, the devil could only hurt his body, whereas finners do, of their own accord, become his flaves, by performing his will; by which means, this enemy of God and man draws their fouls into the abyss of everlasting destruction. The example of that woman, whose faith our Lord commends, and who was healed by touching the hem of his garment, proves that humility and faith have a great efficacy, that trust in Jesus Christ is never vain, and

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and that he is always ready to extend his favours to those that apply themselves to him with such dispositions. The great power of our Lord appears yet with more luftre, in the refurrection of the daughter of Jairus; of which it must be observed, that Christ did not only heal the fick, but that he likewise restored life to the dead; whereby he did both display his infinite power, and confirm the promises which he has made of raising us up at the last day. Thus the confideration of this miracle is of very great efficacy to produce in us a firm hope of immortality. to fill us with comfort in the expectation of it, and to encourage us more and more to the study and practice of piety and good works; that we may one day partake of that bleffed refurrection which Christ has promised.

### C H A P. VI. 1-29.

WE have here an account, I. Of our Saviour's arrival at Nazareth, and of the unbelief of the inhabitants of that town. II. Of the mission of the twelve apostles into Judea. III. Of the death of John the baptist.

### REFLECTIONS.

THESE are the reflections which we ought to make upon the three forementioned heads: I. The first relates to the unbelief and ingratitude of the people of Nazareth, who being so happy as to have our Saviour among them, did not acknowledge that the wisdom and power which were in him proceeded from God, and made so ill a use of his presence, which was the reason that he wrought sew miracles in that place. Thus the prejudices and wickedness of men make them neglect the greatest advantages, at the time when they are offered to them; it likewise shews,

Thews, that if God deprives them of his grace, it is because they are so little fensible of it, and because they put obstacles in their own way. Upon the miffion of the apostles it must be observed, 1. That Jesus Christ, in his wisdom and goodness towards the Jews, sent the apostles throughout Judea, to declare the coming of the kingdom of God; and to render their preaching more effectual, he gave them the power of doing miracles, 2. He forbad them to make any provision for that journey, because it was to be fhort, and to inure them early to rely upon providence. 3. He declared, that those who would not receive them, should be punished most severely; whereby we fee the condemnation of those to whom God offers falvation, and who reject the proffers of his mercy. As to the death of John the baptist, it was owing to the hatred that Herodias bore him, because he condemned her marriage with Herod; and to the base compliance of that prince, who sacrificed John the baptist, for whom he had otherwise a vefleration, looking upon him as a holy and just man, to the refentment of that impudent woman. In this event we perceive, that vicious persons commonly hate those who reprove them for their disorderly lives; and that very great evils spring from impurity, as well as from the compliance which people shew for the wicked, and from rash oaths. It is nevertheless to be noted, that it pleased God to suffer John the baptist to lose his life after this manner, that the Jews might be prepared for that which was to befal our Lord, of whom this holy prophet was the forerunner. It is likewise a thing worthy of attention, that Herod, who was of the fect of the Sadducees; who did not believe a refurrection, should imagine that John the baptist, who had been beheaded by his order, was come to life again; this shews that the wicked and unbelievers have no fixed or fettled notions;

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tions; that a guilty conscience is always in fear, and that wicked men, in the horror of their remorse, acknowledge truths which they before denied, and which are contrary to their avowed sentiments.

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### C H A P. VI. 30---- 56.

I. OUR Lord feeds five thousand people after a miraculous manner. II. His disciples being exposed to a storm, he goes to them walking upon the sea. III. He cures many diseases after he arrived at the country of Genezareth.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE are here to observe in the first place the goodness of our Lord, who, seeing the condition of the people that followed him, was moved with compassion towards them; and bestowed upon them, besides spiritual food for their souls, nourishment also for their bodies, by a wonderful multiplication of the loaves. There is one circumstance which particularly diffinguishes this miracle from the reft: which is, that this miracle was wrought in behalf of a great multitude, whereas the rest were of a private nature; which must make this the more remarkable. He afterwards manifested the same goodnels as well as power, when his disciples being in danger of perishing by a tempest, he went to them walking upon the fea, and made the storm to cease. This new miracle it feems was necessary more fully to convince his disciples of his power; since, as the evangelist remarks, they had not sufficiently attended to his former miracles. Thus our Lord was pleafed to confirm their faith, which was still weak, and convince them more and more that he was the Son of God. What happened on this occasion, should produce in us a firm belief of the unbounded power of Christ, and of the care he takes of his servants; there being no danger which he cannot deliver them from, no affliction which has not in the end an happy issue, which makes dangers and afflictions the greatest proofs of his love. Finally, When we read that they brought to Christ from all parts the sick and diseased, and that they were all healed, even by the bare touch of his garment; we ought to believe, that if he thus displayed his power for the comfort and cure of those that were presented to him, he is not less disposed to save all such as seek from him the cure of their souls; and this should encourage us to have recourse with considence to our gracious Redeemer, to be affished by him in all our wants.

### CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter has two parts: I. The Pharifees complaining that the disciples of Christ did not wash themselves according to the custom of the Jews, he reproaches them for violating the commandments of God, by teaching, that if a child had consecrated and devoted to God that substance wherewith he might have assisted his father and mother, he was obliged strictly to fulfil such a vow, nor was any longer at liberty with that substance to relieve his parents in their wants. He afterwards teaches the people and his disciples what it was that defiled a man, and what did not desile him. II. After this he goes to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and there heals the daughter of a Canaanitish woman; and returning into Galilee, he heals a man that was deaf and dumb.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE may learn from hence, I. That it is hypocrify scrupulously to practife ceremonies and customs established by men, and to violate the divine

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vine laws laws and duties which God has more expressly commanded; that the true service of God consists in keeping his commandments, but that he abhors the worship of hypocrites, who pretend to honour him with their mouths, and with the outfide of religion, whilft their heart is defiled and far from him. II. This discourse of our Saviour teaches us, that it is the will of God that children should honour and affift their parents, and that nothing can excuse them from this duty. III. That those oaths and vows, whereby people oblige themselves to do things contrary to the law of God, do not bind the conscience; and that it would be a fin to perform them. But above all, Christ teaches us, IV. That what defiles us before God, is properly that which proceeds from the heart, fuch as evil thoughts, impure and unjust defires; the hatred of our neighbour; envy, pride and haughtiness; and other passions of the like nature: that these evil thoughts are real fins, being the fource of all the wicked actions that men commit. When Christ gave these instructions, he said, Hear and understand. This advice denotes the importance of this doctrine, and obliges us above all things to avoid that which defiles the foul, and to acquire true purity which is that of the heart. On the second part of this chapter it must be observed, that our Lord being defired by a woman that was a Gentile to heal her daughter, refused at first to grant her request, telling her, it was not fit to give the childrens bread to dogs; that is, to work those miracles in favour of the Gentiles, who are strangers, which Christ only did for the take of the Jews, that were the people of God, and as it were the children of his family. Our Lord faid this, because the Gentiles were not yet to be made equal to the Jews. But that woman obtained at last from him, by her profound humility, perseverance, faith and zeal, the favour which she defired of him. We may

may see by this history, that the heathens were not excluded from the grace of God, and that they were to be soon received into it, as well as the Jews. We see likewise that prayers, attended with humility and zeal, have great efficacy; that if they do not obtain for us at first all that we desire of God, he deals thus with us, to stir us up, and to give us more lively sentiments of our own unworthiness, but that at last we obtain every thing of him by perseverance. Finally, We discover in this and the other miracle of healing the deaf and dumb man, the facility and support authority wherewith Christ cured all sorts of diseases, and that great charity which induced him, upon all occasions, to comfort and assist the miserable, and to do good to all.

#### C H A P. VIII. 1-21.

I. CHRIST feeds miraculously four thousand men. II. He refuses to give a sign, which the Pharisees required of him. And, III. Warns his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE are here to admire the wonderful and gracious manner in which our Lord fed feveral thousand men with seven loaves and a few sishes, as he had done a little before; whereby he was pleased not only to provide for the nourishment of their bodies, but likewise to dispose them to receive from him the true food, which is that of the soul. Further, The great multitude for whom our Lord multiplied the loves and sishes, and the broken pieces that remained, with which the apostles silled seven baskets, are two circumstances which served to confirm the certainty of the miracle, and make it known.

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known. II. We fee that the Pharifees having defired our Saviour to shew them a fign from heaven, he would not gratify them in it. His using them in that manner was very just, fince having already done fo many other miracles, which they had made no advantage of, such a fign could have been of no use to them, nor would they have been affected with it. God, who answers the defires of the fincere and honest heart, justly forfakes those who resist the truth; and when he has done enough to convince men, he is not bound to do any more; and it would be in vain for him to employ new means to convince men whose blindness is voluntary, and the effect of their wickednefs. III. The apostles having forgot to take bread, our Lord warns them against the leaven of the Pharifees and the leaven of Herod, who was of the fect of the Sadducees; this was as much as to fay, that they should beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees, who were hypocrites, and only adhered to the traditions and externals of religion; and the impious opinions of the Sadducees, that denied the refurrection, and maintained other pernicious errors. this divine Saviour, in his great wisdom, take occafion from ordinary occurrences to give his disciples wholfome leffons of instruction. What he fays at this time teaches us to avoid, with the utmost care, all kind of false doctrines and dangerous notions, and especially such as may lead us into superstition and hypocrify; or into irreligion and infidelity.

### C H A P. VIII. 22-38.

I. CHRIST cures a blind man. II. He asks his disciples what opinion the people had of him, and what they themselves thought of him; whereupon St Peter confessed him to be the Son of God. III. Our Lord foretels his death. IV. He exhorts Vol. III.

his disciples to be prepared for sufferings, and to make an open profession of the gospel before men; and to engage them to it, he shews them that it was the only means to avoid the loss of their souls.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

I. IN the healing of the blind man there is this particular observable, viz. That our Lord did not heal him all at once, but did it by degrees. He proceeded in that manner to try his faith, which was not perhaps strong enough; to demonstrate his power to him in a more fensible manner by the progress of his cure, and to let the people see, that in not working his miracles after the fame manner always, he could display the divine power that was in him, either all at once, or by little and little; which shews that he was able to work miracles as he thought convenient. II. We see in the second place, that Christ was esteemed among the Jews as a great prophet, but that St Peter and the other apostles looked upon him as the Son of God. This is likewife what all of us ought to believe in our heart, and confess with our mouth, if we would be faved. Nevertheless, our Lord forbids his disciples to publish that he was the Messiah, because he was not to take upon him openly that character before his death. III. Upon the prediction which Christ made of his own death, it is to be observed, that he warned his disciples of it, that they might be prepared gradually for that great event which they did not expect, and which might otherwife have staggered their faith. It was to make them understand the necessity of this, that he so severely rebuked St Peter, who, being possessed with the Jewish prejudices, could not conceive that the Melfiah; the Son of God, was to die. But what this apostle could not comprehend at that time, is plain to us, who know that the death of Christ is the means that

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that God has been pleased to use for our redemption. IV. And lastly, Christ has taught us, that those who would be his disciples must deny themselves, and be prepared to suffer, and even to die for the gospel, if thereunto called; that there is nothing of so great importance to us, as the saving our souls; and that we ought to make an open profession of godliness and truth, if we would have him own us for his true disciples, and if we desire to be received into his glory when he comes to judge the world. Thus did Jesus Christ instruct men in the most important duties of religion, and set before them the most powerful motives to engage them to the practice of them.

### C H A P. IX. 1-29.

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THIS part of the ninth chapter contains three things: I. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ. II. The explanation which he gave his disciples of the prediction of the coming of Elias. III. The healing of the lunatic, whom the apostles could not cure.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. OUR Lord shewed to three of his apostles the glory of his transfiguration, that he might fully convince them by this glorious appearance that he was the Son of God, and also to strengthen their faith, which was like to be shaken in a short time by his death. The appearing of Moses and Elias on this occasion shewed, that Jesus was that great Redeemer whose coming the prophets had foretold, and that he far excelled the greatest of the prophets, among whom Moses and Elias were the chief. Besides this, God declared by a voice from heaven, that Jesus Christ was his beloved Son. The voice which God

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caused to be heard from heaven upon that occasion, teaches us, that our Lord is that great prophet whom all men are bound to hear and to obey. This transfiguration of Christ is also an image of the glory wherein he shall appear at the last day; and the prefence of Moses and Elias proves, that those holy men lived after their departure out of this world, and that there is a state of happiness reserved for the righteous after this life. II. Our Lord informed his disciples on this occasion, that John the baptist is that Elias who was to come, according to the prophely of Malachi. The name of Elias was given to the forerunner of the Messiah, because, like that prophet, he was to reform the manners of men, and to establish the service of God. The honourable mention our Saviour makes of John the baptist, obliges us to acknowledge the dignity of the person of that great prophet, to reflect feriously upon the design of his ministry, and to submit to his doctrine, as well as that of Jesus Christ, who is still greater than his forerunner. III. In the cure of the lunatic, whom the apostles could not cure, because they were not fufficiently perfuaded that they were able to work that miracle in the name of Jesus Christ, we may remark, that the faith of the apostles was as yet very weak; but that our Lord feeing the deplorable condition of the young man, and having respect to the faith and tears of his father, healed him perfectly, and that only by a word. What Christ said to his apostles on this occasion shews us, that the power of working miracles was to be obtained of God by faith, prayer and fasting. These means being not less necessary to resist temptation, and to procure us the all-powerful affiftance of God's grace, we ought carefully to practife them.

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### C H A P. IX. 30-51.

UR Lord warns his disciples of his approaching death. II. He reproves their disputing who should be the greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah, and teaches them humility, by placing a little child in the midft of them. III. He blames St John and his other disciples for opposing a man who cast out devils in his name; told them that they ought not to offend nor discourage any of those that believe IV. He exhorts them to avoid every thing rhat might be a feandal, or an occasion of falling, either to themselves or others; threaming such as do not avoid thus giving offence, with the pains of hell: he represents to them, that being the falt of the earth, they ought to endeavour after the improvement and edification of all men, particularly taking care to difcourage no one, to entertain fentiments of charity towards all, and to live together in peace and unity.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE must consider, I. That if the apostles did not comprehend what our Lord faid concerning his death, it was because they could not conceive how the Messiah should die and suffer in a cruel and ignominious manner. II. The dispute that arose among them who should be the greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah, was owing to the opinion they had entertained that his kingdom should be a temporal kingdom, and like the kingdoms of this world. Christ undeceived them by setting before them a little child; the defign of which was, to inspire them with humble fentiments, and to teach them not to affect the pre-eminence over each other, nor to despise any one. This lesson concerns all Christians, who ought to banish from their hearts all proud and G 3 haughty

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haughty thoughts, and to become like children in meekness, innocence and humility. III. It is to be observed, that our Lord reproves his disciples, because they would have hindered a man who did not follow them, from cafting out devils in the name of Jesus Christ. From whence we ought to learn, not to reject any who profess to love the Lord Jesus, and to believe him; but on the contrary, to look upon them as brethren, to cherish them, and join ourselves to them. This is what he shews yet more expressly when he fays, that it is a very great fin to despise or offend any of his disciples, even though they should betray some weakness, or might appear contemptible to the world. Laftly, Our Saviour earnestly exhorts us, and with the feverest threatnings, to relist every thing that may draw us into fin, refolutely to renounce whatever is most dear to us, to mortify our inclinations, and even to undergo the greatest troubles, rather than to fall ourselves, or to make others fall into fin, and thereby expose ourselves and them to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. I I Day I all all

### CHAP. X. 1-31.

CHRIST does three things: I. He answers the Pharisees, who questioned with him about divorces, and told them, that the custom which prevailed among the Jews, of putting away their wives for every cause, was contrary to the institution of marriage. II. He blesses young children. III. He answers a rich young man who had asked him what he must do to be saved; upon which occasion he says, that riches would hinder many people from believing in him; but that he would abundantly reward those that should forsake their goods, and all that was dearest to them, to follow him.

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WE may make this general observation upon what our Saviour fays about marriage: That divorce, as practifed by the Jews, was an irregularity which God did not approve, but which however was tolerated, because of the carnal humour of that people, and of their natural inclination to disobedience; but that these divorces ought not to be suffered among Christians, no more than several other things of a like nature which God bore with formerly; that the laws of marriage are inviolable, that they equally bind the man and the woman, and therefore the Son of God having settled the laws of marriage again upon the fame foot they were at the beginning, nothing but adultery can justify a divorce, and the liberty of marrying again. The ceremony of imposition of hands, which Christ practifed with respect to little children, and the prayer he made for them, convinces us that children are dear to him; that it is a practice very agreeable to his will to dedicate them to God by baptism and prayer; and that the kingdom of heaven is referved for those only who, like children, are meek and innocent, and untainted with the love of the world or any of its vanities. We may learn from what passed between Christ and the rich young man, that to enter into eternal life, we must keep the commandments of God; and that befides, we ought on some occasions to forfake all that we possess in this world; and that in general, Christians ought not to set their hearts upon riches; and that if God bestows them upon us, we should employ them to charitable purposes. We gather moreover from the discourse of our Lord, that this renunciation of worldly goods, as hard as it may feem at first, it not impossible, no more than our other duties; and that those who have thus renounced the G 4

the good things of this life, as the apostles did formerly, shall be abundantly rewarded, both here and hereafter. Lastly, The example of this young man, who had something of good in him, and for which Christ loved him, but who was discouraged when our Saviour told him, that he must dispose of his goods, shews, that it may happen, that people who have good intentions, and some good qualities, may, nevertheless, fail of salvation, if they have not courage enough to do all that it is required of them, in order to obtain it; if they will not renounce certain ruling passions, which obstruct their salvation, particularly the love of riches, and a sondness for the things of this world.

### CHAP. X. 32-53.

I. OUR Lord warns his disciples of his death and resurrection. II. Returns an answer to James and John, who sancying, like the rest of the Jews, that the Messiah was to have a glorious reign upon earth, begged of him the chief dignities in his kingdom. III. He restores sight to a blind man near Jericha.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE may consider here in the first place, that the time of Christ's death drawing nigh, he revealed more plainly to his apostles that he was to be crucified, and to rise again; but they were troubled and amazed at this discourse, because they expected to see their Master reign on earth with glory. In this we discover on one hand the wisdom and goodness of our Lord, who was pleased thus to prepare his disciples for that which was to befal him; and on the other hand, that those disciples did still labour under great prejudices; and that they knew not yet what

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what he was to do to fave mankind. In the next place, we must attend to what Christ said to St James and St John, who thought of being highly diffinguished in his kingdom, that instead of expecting to be raifed to great dignities, they should be prepared to drink of the same cup, and to be baptifed with the same baptism as he was; that is to say, to pass through very great sufferings, and even submit to death itself; and that therefore they ought to be humbled, and to become the servants of one another, after the example of their Lord, who came into the world only to ferve and to fuffer. These lessons, and this great example of humility, concern us as well as the apostles; and we ought to set them continually before us, as the rule of our fentiments, and of our behaviour. Lastly, The cure which our Lord granted to the blind man, who implored his affiftance with so much fervency, is a fresh proof of his power and goodness; and we may infer from it, that if he was fo ready to affift the unfortunate, he is yet more disposed to save all such as call upon him with humility, and that feek of him eternal life.

### CHAP. XI.

I. JESUS CHRIST makes his royal entry into Jerusalem. II. He drives out of the temple those that profaned it by selling doves and other creatures for the sacrifices, and by changing of money. III. He causes the fig-tree to wither by his word. And, IV. He answers the Pharisees who required an account of his authority.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. IT is to be observed, that our Lord made his royal entry into Jerusalem a few days before his death, to shew, that he was that glorious King,

that Redeemer whose coming the prophets had fore: told, but which he avoided to declare publicly during his life. But the manner wherein he made this entry. riding upon a young als, shewed his meekness and humility; and was a token that his kingdom no way resembled the kingdoms of this world. Now as we do much better understand the glory of Jesus Christ. and the nature of his kingdom, than the people who attended him on that folemn occasion, we are the more engaged to rejoice and praile God, for having fent us this great Saviour, and for the manifestation of his kingdom. II. It must be observed, that the fame day on which Christ made his royal entry, he went to the temple and drove out those that profaned it, to make the Jews sensible of his divine authority; and, by acting thus as mafter in the temple, to fhew that he was the Son of God. It is likewise a warning to us not to profane, either by hypocrify, impiety or irreverence, the places where God is wor-Thipped and called upon. As for the miracle of the withered fig-tree, we must know this tree was of a particular kind, one of those fig-trees which preferved all the winter their leaves and their figs, and whose fruit grew ripe in spring. Jesus therefore seeing this fig-tree which had leaves, and which might have had figs too, went to feek fruit thereon, though it was not the feafon for common figs; this he did that he might take occasion, by this miracle, to make it wither, and to shew his disciples, that faith and prayer obtain all things from God; but he expressly warns us, that prayer must be made in the spirit of love, and that when we offer up our prayers to God, we should previously forgive one another. fwer our Lord returned to the Pharifees, who asked him whence he had his authority, was to convince them that their blindness and unbelief were wilful, and that his authority proceeded from heaven, as

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well as that of John the baptist; but we should be yet more guilty than those Pharisees, if, knowing that John the baptist and Jesus Christ were sent from God, and professing to believe the same, we should not submit to the doctrine which they preached, and above all, to the authority of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

### C H A P. XII. 1-27.

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I. CHRIST proposes the parable of the husbandmen. II. Answers the question that was put to him about paying tribute to the emperor. And, III. Another question which the Sadducees asked him about the resurrection.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE meaning of the parable of the husbandmen is, that the Jews, after having rejected and persecuted the prophets, would put to death the Son of God, for which reason God would take away his covenant from them, and destroy them; that he would cause the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, and that Christ, who had been rejected by the chief among the Jews, should become the head and king of the church, and be exalted to the right hand of God. Two reflections may be made upon this parable: The first is, That all that Jesus had foretold, was fulfilled foon after by the destruction of Jerusalem, by the calling of the Gentiles, and by the establishment of the kingdom of our Lord. The second, That as God severely punished the ingratitude of the Jews, he will more feverely punish the infidelity of those who, living under the gospel, despite the offers of his grace, and disobey his laws. We may fee by the answer that Christ made concerning the tribute, that he discovered the snare which the Pharilees

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Pharifees laid for him, and avoided it, by telling thent to render unto Cefar the things that are Cefar's, and unto God the things that are God's. From hence we should gather that we are bound to submit to the authority of kings and princes, and to yield them all that is due to them; and likewife to acquit ourfelves inviolably of those duties which we are bound by our religion to pay to God. Our Lord had at that time a remarkable dispute with the Sadducees, who denied the refurrection of the dead. The queltion they put to him upon this subject he answered in fuch a manner as confounded them, and proved them to be in a great error. This passage is well worth our attention: in it Christ teaches us the certainty of the refurrection, and the state of those that shall rife again; which ought to strengthen us in the belief of this great and comfortable truth, and induce us to imitate the faith and piety of the patriarchs, fince the Lord has declared himself to be their God, even after their death; and it should likewise teach us to live after a pure and spiritual manner, that we may partake of the glory of a happy refurrection.

### C H A P. XII. 28 ---- 44.

1. CHRIST answers one of the scribes who asked him which was the greatest commandment. II. He asks the Pharisees, how the Messiah could be at the same time the Son and Lord of David. III. He condemns the hypocrify of the scribes. IV. He praises the offering of a poor widow.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE have here a very important lesson, namely, that the chief commandment, and that which includes all the rest, is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbour as ourselves; that this

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this is most acceptable to God, and worth more than all the ceremonies, and all the external duties of religion. Those who rightly understand this truth, and labour, above all things, to fix in their hearts this love of God, and of their neighbour, are in a fit disposition to enter into the kingdom of heaven, as our Lord has expressly declared. II. Our Lord asking the Pharisees, How David could call the Mesfiah his Lord, in the CXth pfalm, fince he was his Son; they were put to filence and could not answer him a word. By this question, he was minded to make them fensible of their ignorance, but would not explain the difficulty, because they would not have believed what he faid to them, and because he would not then speak openly of the dignity of his person; but this question has nothing obscure in it with respect to us, since we know Christ is the son of David, because, as man, he descended from him; but that he was his Lord, as the Son of God. The reproaches Christ cast upon the scribes shew us, that pride, hypocrify and covetoufness, are most odious vices, especially in those that teach others, and make great professions of piety. IV. The judgment which our Lord passed upon the offering of a poor widow, that cast two little pieces of money into a cheft, where they kept that which was given for the use of the temple, and for divine service, is a proof that God does chiefly regard the heart and intention; and that the contributions and alms of poor people, though they are of little value, are as well received as those of the rich, when the poor give as much as their poverty will allow them, and when they do it out of a principle of piety and charity.

#### CHAP. XIII.

HRIST speaks of the figns that were to pre-I cede the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world. He says there would arise false prophets, and false messiahs; that there would be wars, famines, and all fort of calamities; that his disciples would be perfecuted, and the gospel preached throughout the world. He foretels them that the idolators should soon enter into Judea, and besiege Jerusalem; that there would appear every where tokens of the wrath of God; that then the Son of man would manifest himself in his glory; and that these things should happen before that generation passed away. He exhorts his disciples to depart from Jerusalem at that time, to hold themselves ready, and to watch for his coming; and to induce them fo to do, fays, that the exact time of his coming was uncertain.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS discourse of the Son of God offers to our mind three principal reflections. I. That the event did fully verify all these predictions of our Lord, foon after his departure out of this world, for a fmuch as feveral deceivers or impostors appeared at that time; the Jews were afflicted with war, and scourges of every kind; the apostles and Christians were perfecuted; the gospel spread in several parts of the world; Jerusalem besieged and destroyed by the Romans, and the Christians that came out of it preserved from that defolation; and lastly, that all these things happened before all the men that lived in Christ's time were dead, as he had positively foretold. All these are so many undeniable proofs of the truth and divinity of the gospel, and visible tokens of the divine

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vengeance upon the Jews. II. This ought to convince us, that what Christ said no less positively about his last coming, about the end of the world, the univerfal judgment, and the punishment of wicked men, shall not fail to come to pass. III. The third reflection is, that the time of this coming is unknown to us, as well as the time of our own death, God having concealed it from us in his wildom and goodness; that therefore we ought to think upon it continually, and to prepare ourselves for it by prayer, by a holy life, and by the practice of every good work, ferving God faithfully every one in his calling, that we be not surprised by that terrible day. This is what our Lord himself exhorts us to, in these words, at the end of this discourse, which shew too the use and delign of it: Take beed to yourselves, watch and pray, for you know not when your Lord will come; and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

### C H A P. XIV. 1-31.

ST Mark begins here the history of our Saviour's passion, and relates, I. How a woman anointed him with a precious oil. II. How Judas promised the Jews to betray his Master to them. III. The celebration of the passover the evening before his death; and how, during supper, he foretold the treachery of Judas, and St Peter's denial of him, and the institution of the Lord's supper.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE first reflection to be made relates to the action of that woman, who poured on Jesus a precious ointment. Since Christ approved of that action, commended her zeal and good intentions, and declared, that the remembrance of it should be perpetuated in the church, we cannot but doubt he will

will likewise approve all that we shall do for his honour; his reply to those who would have had that ointment fold, and the money given to the poor, teaches us to avoid rash judgments, and not to blame too hastily the actions of other people, when they may proceed from a good principle; and that we ought to take care of the poor, and embrace every opportunity of doing good to them. II. The example of Judas shews, that covetousness blinds and hardens men to fuch a degree, that it puts them upon committing all fort of crimes. III. Since Christ foretold the treachery of Judas, it appeared from thence, that nothing was concealed from him; that he knew the hearts and defigns of men; that he forefaw what was to happen to himself, and consequently that all his fufferings were voluntary. IV. Christ celebrated the passover with his disciples, according to the custom of the Jews, to shew, that he strictly observed every thing that was prescribed by the law of God; but he chiefly did it because his design was to institute the Lord's fupper, and to substitute it in the place of the Jewish passover. This ought to inspire us with a very great respect for this divine ceremony, which our Lord has established as a memorial of his death, and to engage us to celebrate it with faith and thanksgiving, according to his intentions. Finally, The prediction that St Peter should deny him, suppoles our Lord to have an entire knowledge of the heart of man; and what he faid to that apostle, who vowed he would never forfake him, ought to fill us with a distrust of ourselves, which is of great use; and induce us to improve the warning which God gives us, and to feek in humility, in watching, and in prayer, for that constancy and courage, so necessary to secure us from being surprised by temptation.

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I. ST Mark relates here what Christ suffered in the garden. II. How he was apprehended by the Jews who were conducted by Judas. III. What passed while Jesus was before the council. IV. St Peter's fall, and his repentance.

#### REFLECTIONS

THE extreme anguish which our Lord felt in the garden is one of the most remarkable circumstances of his passion, It discovers very plainly to us, that he suffered to atone for the fins of mankind; and we may judge from thence how great is the horror of fin, and with what despair the wicked will be feized, when they are rejected of God, and undergo the punishment due to their fins. We ought next, in imitation of Jesus Christ, who in his agony prayed with fo much fervour, and with fo perfect a fubmission to the will of his father, to call upon God with perseverance when we are under affliction; and at the same time, with an entire refignation to his will, faying, Lord, not what I will, but what thou wilt. Jesus Christ gives us all a very important piece of advice, when he fays, Watch and pray, left you enter into temptation; the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. Christ affures us thereby, that the infallible way not to fall into fin, is to distrust our own weakness, and to watch and pray; but that we are drawn away by temptations as foon as ever we neglect these means. By the manner in which our Lord was taken, and by what he then faid to Judas, and to the Jews, it appears plainly, that of his own free choice, and by the divine permission, he was taken and condemned; this is another powerful inducement for us to love our Saviour most fervently, Vol. III. H who

who has been pleased to expose himself thus freely to death for our fakes, and to engage us to acquiesce and submit to the will of the Lord in all things. Observe, that Jesus appeared before the council; that he was examined, and that witnesses were heard against him; but could not be convicted of any crime, notwithstanding all the pains which his enemies took to find out accufations and false witnesses against him; and was condemned only because he confessed himself to be the Son of God: which was fo ordered by providence, to evince the perfect innocence of our Lord. That great meekness, and that spirit of humility and patience, which our Lord manifested in his discourses, and in suffering all the indignities they put upon him, is a very fensible proof of his submission to the will of his father, and of his love towards us, and a pattern of patience, to which we ought to conform ourselves. We have likewise seen, how our Lord owned that he was the Son of God; and faid, that the Jews should see him fitting at the right hand of God, and coming in his glory. This was fulfilled quickly after, when the Iews were deftroyed, and when they faw the kingdom of our Lord established in the world. We ought also to improve, to our own advantage, the fall of St Peter, who denied his Mafter, after fuch a folemn protestation that he would never forfake him. Every body, even those who have great zeal and good intentions, may learn from hence, how great our weakness is, and that we ought to be upon our guard against temptation: and the repentance of this apostle, which was fo fpeedy and fo bitter, teaches us, that when we stumble, or have fallen, we ought to rife again immediately, be heartily grieved for our fin, and repair it by having recourse to the mercy of God, and by a fincere conversion and reformation.

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#### CHAP. XV.

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I. CHRIST is brought before Pilate, who, after having endeavoured to deliver him, confents at last to his death. II. He is crucified, dies, and is buried.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IN what passed before Pilate, there are four things chiefly to be observed. I. The injustice and rage of the Jews, which nothing could appeale, and who so earnestly solicited the condemnation of Jesus, that they preferred even a murderer before him. II, The humility, filence, and patience of our Lord, who submitted himself to the judgment of Pilate, and underwent, without complaining, all the unjust treatment he received from them. These are strong proofs of his love for men, whom he defired to fave; and of his submission to the will of his father; and it is likewise an example of resignation for such as are exposed to sufferings, or to the injustice of men. III. It is to be observed, that the innocence of Christ was fully acknowledged by Pilate, which aggravated the guilt of the Jews, as well as that of the governor, And, lastly, That that unjust judge, after having refused to do what the Jews required, and, after having endeavoured to fave the life of Christ, did at length pronounce the fentence of death against him. Pilate knew what justice required of him; he had even good intentions, but wanted courage and refolution to follow them. Thus do they who fin against conviction; they know their duty, and have some good inclination towards it; but after they have refifted temptation for a while, do at last yield to it, for fear of men, and out of views of policy and interest, or for some other principle of the like nature; whereas good men do always adhere to their duty, and pursue with fteadine's H 2

steadiness the dictates of their conscience, without turning afide for any confideration whatever. In the history of our Lord's passion, we are chiefly to confider the torments of that cruel punishment he underwent; the shame and ignominy to which he was exposed, by being crucified between two thieves; the outrages and infults which the Pharifees and priefts offered to him whilft he was fastened to the cross; and, lastly, The death which put an end to his sufferings. We discover in all this the profound humiliation of the Son of God; the great love that he has shewn for us, and an example of most perfect patience. Wherefore we ought to look upon his death as the price of our redemption, and the support of our faith; to love this kind Saviour, who has fo loved us; to renounce fin, which he came to destroy by his death; and to learn from him to bear our cross, and to fuffer patiently when we are called thereto. The history of Christ's burial, and the enquiry Pilate made before he would grant his body to Joseph, prove that he was really dead, and, confequently, that he really rose again. The consideration of his burial is likewife very proper to disperse the fear that we may entertain of death, and of the grave, and to raise our minds to the expectation of a better life.

### CHAP. XVI.

I. In this last chapter of St Mark, we see the history of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. II. The orders he gave his apostles before he lest the world. And, III. His ascension.

### REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is contained in this chapter establishes the truth and certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, since it was confirmed by the apparition

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and testimony of the angels, and that our Lord was feen first by the women that went to his sepulchre, and afterwards by the apostles, at several times. We ought to confider next, how glorious this refurrection was, God having been pleased to send angels to open the tomb of our Lord, and to declare to men that he was rifen again. This wondeful event proves, therefore, that Jesus was the Son of God, and is an affurance to us, that he has perfectly reconciled us to God by the facrifice of himself, and that he has overcome death and the grave. This refurrection is likewise a certain earnest of our own, which ought to fill us with comfort and confidence, and powerfully excite us to holiness. The command that Christ gave his apostles, to go and preach and baptize throughout the world, and the power with which he endued them to work all forts of miracles, shew, that he spake as king of the church, and Lord of all things; and the event agreeing with what he had faid, does undeniably prove, that he is exalted to a fupreme power, and that the gospe! is a divine and heavenly doctrine. We may observe particularly, that Christ speaks of baptism after such a manner, as proves that this ceremony is of divine institution; but that he declares, at the same time, that baptism will not fave us, unless it be attended with a true Lastly, The ascension of Christ obliges us to confider him as one who has a fovereign authority over all things, and who must be our judge. And fince he is likewise gone to heaven, to prepare a place for us there, we may aspire and endeavour, by holiness and by good works, to attain to that glorious mansion into which our Redeemer is entered, and where he is seated at the right hand of God.

The End of the Gospel according to St MARK.

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## GOSPEL

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### ARGUMENT.

This Gospel was written about twenty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, by St Luke, who was the disciple and companion of St Paul, and followed him in his travels.

### CHAP. I. 1-38.

I. A N angel appearing to Zachariah foretels the birth of John the baptist. II. And six months after, the same angel was sent to the blessed virgin, to foretel the birth of our Lord.

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REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

WHAT we have been reading relates to the birth of John the baptist, and his ministry. As to his birth, it may be observed, that there was fomething extraordinary and supernatural in it, since he proceeded from a father advanced in years, and from a mother that was old and barren; that God gave notice of his birth by an angel; and that Zachariab the father, who could not helieve it, was affured of it by a miracle, which God wrought in ftriking him dumb. All which tended to fhew, that John the baptist was to be an extraordinary person, and fent from God; this birth was likewise a prelude to that of Jesus Christ, which would be yet more miraculous, fince he was to be born of a virgin. As to the ministry of John the baptist, we ought ferioully to confider what the angel faid to Zachariah, revealing to him what his fon was one day to be; namely, that he would be filled with the holy Ghoft, that he should go before the face of the Lord, and that, like another Elias, he would perfuade men to turn unto God, and to live a life of righteousness by the feverity of his own life, by his authority, by his great zeal, and by the power of his exhortations; and that by this means he would prepare them to receive the Messiah, of whom he was to be the forerunner. Let us learn from hence this important lesson, that the design of God in sending John the baptist, and afterwards Jesus Christ, was to bring about the conversion of mankind, to withdraw them from their fins, and make them a holy people, and given to good works. In what the angel faid to the virgin Mary, when he acquainted her that she was to be the mother of Jesus Christ, we may chiefly remark these two things: One, that the body of our Lord was formed of the substance of the virgin, by the operation H 4

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operation of the holy Ghost; and the other, that this Jesus, who was to be born of Mary, would be the Son of God, that he would be exalted to very great glory, and that he would reign for ever. From whence we may collect, that the birth of Christ was miraculous, and intirely free from pollution; that he did really assume our nature, and become man like unto us; but that he was also perfectly holy and separated from finners. Lastly, It is to be observed, that though the bleffed virgin could at first scarce believe what the angel told her, yet when she had heard the meffage more fully explained, she then no longer doubted but what had been declared to her from God, would certainly come to pass. This was a proof of the faith and piety of the bleffed virgin, and a pattern to us how we should believe the promifes of God, made to us in his word; being fully perfuaded that he will never want power nor means to bring about his promifes, how difficult soever the execution of them may appear to us.

# CHAP. I. 39-80.

1. ST Luke gives us an account of the bleffed virgin's visit to Elizabeth, and her song on this occasion. II. Of the birth of John the baptist, and the song of his father Zachariah.

### REFLECTIONS.

LET it here be considered, I. That the blessed virgin, having been informed by the angel Gabriel, that her cousin Elizabeth had also miraculously conceived, went immediately to visit her, and was by this means more fully confirmed in a belief that the Messiah should be born of her, according to the message she had received from God. But what deserves chiefly to be taken notice of, is the song of Mary on this occasion.

occasion. In this fong we see how she was transported with joy and gratitude, at the sense of the favour God had done her, in making choice of her to be the mother of the Messiah. In it we discover her profound humility, and at the same time her faith and firm persuasion that God was going to deliver his people, and to fulfil the promifes he had made them of fending the Redeemer. This engages us to honour the memory of the bleffed virgin, and to celebrate her happiness as she herself has described it; to imitate her piety, her faith, and her other virtues; to abase ourselves before God as she did, under the sense of his mercies, and of our own unworthiness, and praise him above all things for having fent into the world Christ our Saviour, according to the promifes made by the prophets. The birth of John the baptist was attended with several very remarkable circumstances; Zachariah his father did then recover his speech by a miracle; the rumour of his fon's birth was spread abroad, and all people were in great expectation what that child would one day be. All these events were the difpensations of providence, that the Jews might be prepared to look upon John the baptist as one sent from God, to receive his preaching, and to believe his testimony concerning Jesus Christ. In the fong which Zachariah did then pronounce by the inspiration of the holy Ghost, we may observe these three things: First, His joy, his gratitude, and thanks to God, that the time was come to redeem his people. Secondly, His extraordinary faith, fince, though the Messiah was yet unborn, he was firmly convinced that he would shortly appear, and that his Son would be his forerunner. Thirdly, Zachariah shews in this fong the defign of Christ's coming, when he says, That we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness,

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ness, all the days of our life. This should stir us up to bless God with Zachariah, and even more than he, for faving us by Jesus Christ; and to extol his mercy, as well as his faithfulness, and the truth of his promises. And since our Lord is come to confecrate us to the service of God, it is our duty to answer the design of his coming, by serving God faithfully, and by living in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

#### CHAP. II.

WE have here the history of the birth of Jesus Christ.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE first reflection we are to make upon the history of our Saviour's birth is, that the Mesfiah being to be born at Bethlehem, according to the prophecies, providence conducted the bleffed virgin from Galilee, where she dwelt, to that city, by means of the decree of the emperor Augustus, who had ordered an account to be taken of the number of all his fubjects, and that therefore every one should resort to the place of his birth. II. That our Lord was born in very poor and mean circumstances, being born in an inn and laid in a manger; by which God was pleased as it were to declare beforehand, that Christ was not to live in pomp and glory, and that his kingdom would not be of this world, and that humility and poverty would be his character. III. For the fame reason it was that the first persons who were honoured with the news of Christ's birth were shepherds, plain men, of an obscure condition, and not the rich and great. All these things are great lessons of humility to Christians. However, it must be observed, that this birth was rendered illustrious by the apparition

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of the angels, and by the fong of those bleffed spirits. It pleased God, moreover, that the shepherds should go to Betblebem to see the child Jesus, and to inform the holy virgin of all the wonders they had seen and heard; and then that they should publish them all abroad, that the expectation of the Jews might be excited, and they prepared for the reception of Jesus Christ. All these circumstances of our Lord's birth ought to strengthen our faith, and fill us with joy and comfort; we ought especially to join our praises to those of the shepherds and holy angels, and bless God with them, that a Saviour is born unto us; and by his birth, peace given to the earth, and the good will of God so clearly manifested towards men.

### CHAP. II. 21-52.

ST Luke relates, I. The circumcision of Christ, the presenting him in the temple, and the thanks-givings of Simeon and Anna the prophetess. II. He informs us in the next place, how Christ, being twelve years old, was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE may consider, I. In relation to what is here faid about the circumcision of Christ, his prefentation in the temple, the purification of the virgin, and the offering which she made according to the custom, that God thought sit that all these things should be observed, after the birth of our Lord, because they were prescribed by the law, and that the Jews might not have any appearance of reason for rejecting him. II. The joy which simeon and Anna the prophetes shewed at that time, and the praises which they publicly gave to God, are an argument of their faith and zeal, and that the birth of Christ is

the most happy and the most falutary event that ever came to pais, and that therefore we ought to have a very joyful fense of it, and incessantly to bless the Lord for it; and the rather, because what Simeon said in his fong, has been accomplished in us, and we are some of those Gentiles, to whom the Messiah came to give light and falvation. III. What Simeon faid to the bleffed virgin, of the glory of her Son, as well as of the contradictions and fufferings to which he should be exposed; tended to convince her, that the kingdom of Christ would not be a temporal kingdom, and to prepare her to see him rejected by the Jews, and put to death. As for us, we ought to learn from thence, that our Saviour was to be received by some, and rejected by others; and that if his coming be a bleffing to fuch as receive him with faith, it is an occasion of scandal and destruction to unbelievers. IV. That which happened to Christ at the age of twelve years, when he was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, is the only circumstance of his life, from his birth and return from Egygt to the beginning of his ministry, which has been made known to us. This particular instance was recorded to shew, that there appeared in him, even from his earliest youth, extraordinary understanding, wisdom and zeal, and that he was to be one day endowed with the spirit of God in an abundant manner. God was pleased thereby to begin to make him known to the Jews, and to dispose them to profit by his miniftry, when he should exercise it among them.

### CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains three things: I. The preaching of John the baptist. II. The baptism of Jesus Christ. And, III. His genealogy.

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ST Luke informs us here, that before the appearance of our Lord, John the baptist was sent, as had been foretold by the prophets, to prepare the Jews for his reception: this he did by preaching repentance, and by exhorting the people to believe on him who was to come foon after; by baptizing those that received his doctrine, and by threatning the unbelieving and impenitent Jews, that although they were the children of Abraham, they should not escape the wrath to come, and that God could raise up other children to Abraham, even from the stones; which denoted that the Gentiles should be called in their stead. All this tended to make the Jews understand that the kingdom of the Messiah was shortly to be manifested; but that it was to be a spiritual and heavenly kingdom, and not an earthly kingdom as they expected; and that no body would have any share in the advantages of that kingdom, but fuch as should give themselves up to holiness and to virtue. These instructions concern us as well as the Jews; they shew, that without amendment of life we cannot be the difciples of Jesus Christ; that he receives into his church and kingdom, only those who bring forth fruits meet for repentance. John the baptist declares further, that to be in covenant with God, and to have a great appearance of zeal, fignifies nothing; but that we must shew by the effects and by our works, the sincerity of our faith and repentance; and that hardened and impenitent finners shall no more escape divine vengeance than hypocrites. The example of those who went to hear John the baptist and to ask his advice, teaches us our duty. 'It is the character of true penitents freely to confess their fins, and to apply for instruction as their needs require, and follow it with docility. Besides this, the different advice John the baptist

baptist gave the people, the publicans and the soldiers. shews us, that every one ought faithfully to discharge the duties of his calling, and to avoid those fins and temptations to which it may expose him; particularly, that we ought to exercise charity, and to renounce covetousness, injustice, violence and fraud, What we are to confider about the baptism of Jesus Christ, is, that God thought fit he should be baptized by John, and that upon this occasion the holy Ghost came down upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven, that John the baptist himself, the Jews, and all men, might confider our Lord as the Son of God, and as him whom they ought to obey. As to the genealogy of Jesus Christ, here set down by St Lake, we must observe that it differs from that of St Matthew, because St Matthew gives us the genealogy of Toseph, the husband of the holy virgin, by Solomon, the fon of king David; whereas St Luke deduces the virgin's pedigree by Nathan, who was likewise a son of David. Jesus passed for the son of Foseph, and was so in the eye of the law; but he descended from Heli, and was his fon, that is, his grandfon by Mary his mother, who was the daughter of Heli. Both these genealogies agree in making our Lord to defeend from king David and the patriarch Abraham, which was one of the characters of the Messiah.

### CHAP. IV. 1-15.

THE evangelist gives us here the history of our Saviour's fasting and temptation. And how he began the exercise of his ministry in Galilee.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. OUR Saviour's fast was by way of preparation to the exercise of his ministry, in which he resembled Moses, who had also fasted forty days when God

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God gave him the law on mount Sinai. If Jesus Christ was pleased to fast, who had no need of mortification, we ought by no means to neglect fo ufeful an exercise, who stand in so great need of abstinence and felf-denial. II. We must know, that when the devil is faid to tempt Jesus, the meaning is, that he had a mind to try whether Jesus was the Son of God, and that God permitted him to be thus tempted, before he began to preach the gospel, and to work miracles; that the devil, being convinced that Jesus was really the Son of God, he might revere his power and obey his commands, when afterwards he should drive out devils from such as were possessed by them. The end therefore of this temptation was, to shew that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he came into the world to destroy the kingdom of the devil. To this general confideration, we may add two particular ones: The first is, that we should resist all temptations, and especially such as lead us to distrust the divine assistance, or to prefumption, or to the love of glory, and the good things of this world: The fecond confideration relates to the means of refifting tempta-The retreat of Jesus Christ into the wilderness, his fasting, and the manner in which he repelled the affaults of the devil, teach us, that retirement, fasting, prayer, and the word of God, are the most efficacious methods to overcome temptation, and to defeat the attempts of the enemies of our falvation.

### CHAP. IV. 16-44.

I. OUR Lord being at Nazareth on a sabbath-day, in the synagogue, read that prophesy of Isaiah, which described God's sending the Messiah, and silling him with his spirit, to declare to men the glad tidings

tidings of falvation; and he shewed that that prophecy was fulfilled in his own person. Then he reproached the inhabitants of that city with their unbelief, which did so exasperate them, that they would have thrown him down headlong from a precipice; but he escaped their fury. II. He went from thence to Capernaum, where he cured a man possessed with a devil, as also the mother in law of St Peter, and several other diseased persons; and went through Galilee, working miracles, and preaching the gospel.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE meaning and defign of our Lord's difcourse in the synagogue of Nazareth, was, first, to shew that fince he was endued with the gifts of the holy Ghost, and published to men the glad tidings of falvation; the prophefy of Isaiab, quoted in this chapter, was fulfilled in him. II. Jesus was desirous to make the inhabitants of that city, among whom he had been brought up, fensible that their infidelity was the cause that he did not work the same miracles among them as he had elsewhere; in the same manner as formerly Elijab and Elisha had wrought miracles in favour of strangers, preferably to those of their own nation; whence we learn, that those who have the best means and the greatest opportunities of knowing the truth, often make the least use of them: and again, that God deprives those of his grace and falutary presence, who render themfelves unworthy of it. In the resolution which the inhabitants of Nazareth took, to throw down Christ from a precipice, we have a fresh proof of that infidelity which he reproached them with, and of their ingratitude. Thus finners are angry with those who tell them the truth, and reproach them for their However, Christ gave another mark of his infinite power in escaping the fury of these wretches,

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who would have taken away his life. The feveral miracles that are related about the end of this chapter, and by which our Lord began to make himself known in Galilee, and the care he took to pass thro' all its towns preaching the gospel, are so many proofs of his great zeal, of his unlimited power, of his love towards mankind, and of the divinity of his doctrine.

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I. CT Luke speaks of the miraculous draught of fishes which St Peter caught at our Lord's command. II. Of the healing of the leper. III. And of the paralytic. IV. Of the calling of Levi, or the apostle St Matthew. And lastly, of Jesus's reply to those who found fault at his eating with publicans and finners, and at his disciples not fasting as those of John did. which we are moft fare to dealer, i

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE ought to admire the power of Christ as well as his wisdom, in the wonderful draught of fishes, which we have read the history of. He wrought this miracle to confirm St Peter and some of his companions in their vocation to the office of apostles; and to assure them that they should be very successful in their ministry. This miracle must have made the greater impression on them, as our Lord did it in a matter that related to their own business; as they were fishers they were the more sensible of the greatness of it; and it did accordingly produce fuch an effect in the mind of St Peter, who being feized with admiration, respect and fear, at the fight of what had happened, immediately, with his companions St James and St John; forfook all to follow our Lord. In the cure of the leper, there are thefe two things to be observed, viz. That it was for his

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faith and prayers that he was made whole, and that our Lord fent him to the prieft, and commanded him to offer what was ordered by the law of Moses in the like case. He did this the better to convince the priefts of the certainty of the miracle he had wrought. and to shew that he observed all that God had commanded in the law. There is in the case of the paralytical person this peculiarity, that to him our Lord granted not only the cure of his bodily difease, but pardon of fins, which he declared he had power to do: a proof to us that he had a supreme authority. over all men: and as it was the faith of those that presented him to the Lord which moved him to work a cure upon him; this teaches us, that faith is of very great efficacy, and that he that would feel the effects of God's grace and favour must pray with confidence. Of all favours, the most necessary, and that which we are most fure to obtain, is pardon of fins: It is to be observed in the calling of St Matthew, who was a publican, or a collector of taxes, that our Lord chose his disciples and apostles among persons that were even looked upon with contempt by the Jews, as were the publicans. In imitation of St Matthew, who left his employment as foon as Jefus called him, we must learn to obey the heavenly call as soon as we receive it, and renounce without delay every thing that may hinder us. Our Saviour's reply to the Pharifees, who were offended at his keeping company with finners, teaches us, that the end of his coming was to fave finners; but however, that finners cannot be faved without repentance; this likewife shews us, that those who have the spirit of Christ, are glad when God turns finners from the error of their ways, and earnestly endeavour to bring them into the right way. Laftly, It must be remembered, that if our Lord did not oblige his disciples to fast, as the disciples of John the baptist did, we must not imagine that our Lord's fense

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fense of the duty of falting differed from that of John, or that the fasts which John's disciples observed were too difficult for Christ's disciples to perform. The only difference between them in this respect, was, that Christ conversed freely with all forts of people, and upon all occasions, whereas John the baptist lived a retired life. He declares, however, that his disciples would be called, after his departure from them, not only to falting but to great fufferings; and, that if he did not call them at that time to sufferings, it was to spare their weakness. From hence we may gather, that Christ was so far from condemning fasting and a mortified life, or from suffering his disciples to hunt after pleasures and gratify their fenses, that, on the contrary, he calls them to live in fobriety and mortification, and to bear their

### C H A P. VI. 1-19.

I. OUR Lord vindicates his disciples plucking and eating the ears of corn on the sabbath-day. II. He cures a man that had a withered hand. And, III. He appoints the twelve apostles.

### REFLECTIONS.

I.T HE reflection we are to make upon our Lord's answer to the Pharisees, who were offended because his disciples had plucked the ears of corn, and because he himself had healed a man with a withered hand on the sabbath-day, is, that the hypocritical and envious are very apt to condemn others, and are offended at that which is innocent and lawful, and sometimes even with actions that are necessary and commendable; and scruple things of small moment, while they themselves are wanting in the most essential duties of piety and charity. We

ought, therefore, to learn from hence to avoid hypocrify, fuperstition, and rash judgment; and always to cleave to the most weighty matters in religion, and to a folid piety enlightened and attended with charity. We further learn, that no one should omit actions truly good and necessary under a pretence that some people may judge ill of them; and that the fear of offending persons of bad dispositions should never keep us from our duty. What is to be observed on the calling of the apostles, is, that those holy men whom the Lord made choice of to be the dispensers of his grace and to convert the world, were mean and inconfiderable in the eye of the world; fo that we fee in this choice a proof of the divinity of the gospel, and of the almighty power of Christ, who endued them with gifts sufficient for fuch an employment. The memory of these first ministers of the gospel should be precious among Christians, who ought to praise God for the great things he has done by their means; to receive the doctrine they taught, and which is contained in their writings; and laftly, to practife the holy commands which they have left us, as the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, to whom be ascribed all glory, praise, and obedience, for ever and ever. Amen.

# CHAP. VI. 20-49.

W E have here a discourse of our Lord concerning the true happiness and misery of man; of charity; of preserving peace; of the love of our enemies; of rash judgment; and of some other duties. He concludes by a parable, shewing, that it is of no use to hear his word, if we do not do the things which he commandeth.

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THIS discourse contains several useful instruc-The first is, that the poor, afflicted, despised, and persecuted, who are at the same time, meek, patient, and godly, are the true disciples of Iefus Chrift, and will be happy in this world and the next; and that on the contrary, those who are thought the most happy, because they live in plenty and in pleasures, and because they are loved and effeemed by the world, are the most miserable. fecond instruction is, that we ought to love every body, even those that do not love us; to return them good for evil; to fuffer fome loss or injury rather than revenge ourselves, or engage in quarrels and law-fuits; that if we only love those who love us, we are no better than heathers; but that we ought to be merciful and to do good to all; imitating therein our heavenly father, who is kind both to the wicked and ungrateful. Our Lord has forbidden us to pais rash judgments; and declared that it is a very great piece of hypocrify, to examine and censure other mens faults without amending our own, which are oftentimes greater than those of our neighbours. The fourth instruction is comprised in these expresfions; namely, that the tree is known by its fruit; and that from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. That is to say, that men shew by their behaviour and discourse what they are; and that the way to order our actions and words aright, is to purify our hearts. Lastly, Christ tells us in the most politive manner, that he does not acknowledge for his disciples those that call him Lord, but do not obey his commands; and shews, by the comparison of one house built on a rock, and another upon the land, that nothing can shake those, who, to the knowledge of the gospel join the practice of its duties; whereas those that content themselves with hearing his word, without doing that which it commands, cannot resist temptations, nor attain salvation. Let us incessantly set before our eyes these divine rules of morality prescribed by Jesus Christ; let us make them subservient to our advancing in piety; and let us beseech him that he himself will enable us to do it by his grace.

# CHAP. VII. 1-23.

JESUS cures the servant of a Gentile captain; raises from the dead the son of a widow woman of the city of Nain; and answers the disciples of John the baptist, who came to ask him whether he was the Messiah.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IN the cure of the centurion's fervant, we may remark the humility of that officer, who, being a Gentile by birth, thought himself not worthy that Christ should come into his house; as also the greatness of his faith, which appears in his belief that our Lord, without coming to fee his fervant, could heal him by one word only. Our Lord's extraordinary commendations of the faith of this centurion, faying, "that he had not found fuch faith among the Jews," and the miracle he wrought in his favour, shew very plainly, that nothing is more acceptable to him than faith and humility; and that a lively faith, and a profound fense of our own unworthiness, are the fure means to obtain from him the effects of his mercy. The other miracle that our Lord wrought in raising the son of the widow of Nain, is an event in which the power of Jesus Christ appears in a manner yet more illustrious, as well as his goodness and compassion for the afflicted. This history,

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history, therefore, affords very powerful motives for trust and reliance on him; which ought to fill us with comfort, and fully convince us, that as our Lord has raised the dead upon several occasions, he is able to restore us to life after death, and that he will certainly do it at the last day, according to his promises. Our Saviour's answer to John's disciples is remarkable; for, being asked whether he was the Meffiah, he did not give a direct answer, but contented himself with working miracles in their prefence, which proved more plainly that he was the Messiah, than if he had said it himself. We see in this part of our Saviour's conduct, a remarkable instance of his wisdom; since, by not directly calling himself the Messiah, which he always avoided doing publickly, he did, however, every thing that was most proper to convince men that he was that great Redeemer which God had promifed to fend, and the Jews expected.

### C H A P. VII. 24-50.

OUR Lord speaks of John the baptist, re-presenting the nature and excellence of his ministry. II. He complains, that most of the Jews, and particularly the scribes and Pharisees, had rejected his ministry, as well as that of John. III. Being at dinner with a Pharisee, he pronounces forgiveness of fins to the woman that was a finner.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE meaning of what Christ said to the Jews concerning the ministry of John the baptist, was, that as John the baptist had not appeared in the pomp and fplendor which usually attend the ambasladors of earthly kings, but only in quality of a great prophet; they should not be surprised, if he

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himself appeared in a low condition, nor reject him on that account. By which he would give them to understand, that the kingdom of the Messiah should have nothing in it carnal and worldly; and engage them to attend wholly to his spiritual and divine doctrines. II. Christ fays on this occasion, that as great as John the baptist was, the least in the kingdom of God, that is, of his true disciples, would be greater than he; because Christians know more of the Messiah, and the reasons of his coming, than John the baptist himself did. These words, which inform us of the advantages of our condition, should stir us up to act in a manner suitable to them, and to render ourfelves worthy of them. III. We fee that those perions who were the most contemptible, and the most hated among the Jews, were affected at the preaching of John the baptist and our Saviour; but that the Pharifees, and those who passed for the wifest among them, had rejected those exhortations, faying, that the life of John the baptist was too strict, and that of Christ too loose, because he often kept company with This inflance proves, that nothing can fatisfy a corrupt heart. Behave with ever so great caution, there is no avoiding the cenfure of fuch perfons; whilft those whose heart is right, do zealously lay hold of the means which God affords for their edification and falvation. IV. The history of the woman that was a finner, has fomething in it very remarkable, and inftructs us in the nature and efficacy of true repentance. We find in the penitent finner here mentioned, a pattern of that profound humility with which great finners ought to bewail their fins; and of that lively forrow which pierces the foul, and which expresses itself by confession, by tears, and by all the tokens of a fincere compunction, and of a holy confusion; and which produces an entire renunciation of fin. We see here with how much good-

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goodness the Saviour of the world receives true penitents, and pardons their faults. What he fays to the Pharifee, who believed that Jesus was not a prophet, because he permitted that same sinner to approach him, and to kiss his feet; tended to convince him, that he knew very well what this woman was, but that he did not reject great finners when they were truly penetent, and that we also should not reject nor despise them: we must likewise take a particular notice of these words of our Lord; He to whom much is forgiven will love him the more. By which he shews plainly, that those to whom God pardons great fins, ought to love him with greater fervency, and that they may even attain to a confiderable degree of holiness. This is a doctrine very proper for the consolation of sinners, and which ought to animate them to the love of God, and to the practice of piety and good works.

### C H A P. VIII. 1-25.

THIS part of the eighth chapter of St Luke, includes three things. I. The parable of the feed. II. The declaration our Lord makes, that his true disciples were as dear to him as his own kindred. And, III. The stilling the tempest.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE design of Jesus Christ in the parable of the seed, was to teach those that heard him, that all men do not receive the word of God after the same manner. The seed that falls on the way-side, represents people that are entirely hardened, and such as this word does not at all affect. By the seed that fell among stones, our Lord describes the condition of those on whom the word makes some impression; who approve of it at first, and receive it gladly;

gladly; but being not well grounded, they do not persevere, but yield to temptation. The seed that falls among thorns, fets before our eyes the condition of those hearers on whom the gospel does not produce its effect, because their heart is taken up with the love of riches and pleasures, and loaded with the cares of this life. But by the feed that is fown in good ground, and that brings forth much fruit, Christ denotes the effect which the word produces in those who receive it in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with perseverance. Let us listen feriously and continually to this parable; let us take care, as our Lord exhorts us here, after what manner we receive the word of God, and carefully examine ourselves, to see whether we make a good use This is what we are further obliged to by the declaration which our Lord made, when he was told, that his mother and his near relations defired to fpeak with him. We may learn from what he then faid, that what chiefly procures us a share in his love, is a great attention and a great zeal to hear his word and to do his will. What thus unites us to Christ, should also strictly unite us to each other. The bands of holiness are yet stronger than those of nature; and of all men, those ought to have the greatest share of our affection and esteem. who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ and keep his Laftly, We find here, that our commandments. Lord, who had done so many miracles for the relief of the afflicted, was pleased to work a miracle in favour of his apostles, delivering them from great danger, when they were ready to perish in the water, The apostles were in great fear upon this occasion, and our Lord taking notice of the weakness of their faith, rebukes them for it, but, however, delivers them from their danger. Our weaknesses do not hinder God from granting us the affiftance we stand in need

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need of, if we apply to him with fincerity and humility. Those whom God loves, may meet with great dangers, and, in such a condition, they may be overcome with sears, but God will never forsake them; and whatever condition they are in, he savours them with his love and protection.

# C H A P. VIII. 26-56.

CHRIST works three miracles: I. He cures the demoniac. And, II. The woman that had the iffue of blood. III. Raifes to life the daughter of Jairus.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is here related of the deplorable condition which the man possessed with a devil had for a long time been in, and the feveral circumstances of his history, prove the certainty of the miracle which our Lord wrought on this occasion, as well as his great mercy and goodness towards him. Christ's giving the devils leave to enter into the herd of fwine, is another proof of the greatness and reality of the miracle, and of the absolute power he had over the devils; and a proof, likewife, that those wicked spirits feared and dreaded him as their judge. Jesus having delivered this man, ordered him to declare abroad how great things God had done for him. Thus ought we to acknowledge and publish the goodness of the Lord towards us, when he has granted us any fignal favour or deliverance. should consider farther, that though men are not now exposed to the power of the devils, as the possessed of devils were in our Saviour's time, they may fall, however, after another manner into the power of this enemy of our falvation. This is the dreadful condition of those, of whom the scripture says, that the

devils works powerfully on them, and that they are taken captive by him at his will. In the cure of the woman who had an iffue of blood, we are principally to attend to her fentiments and behaviour; not daring to present herself to our Lord, to beg him to heal her; she was contented to touch his garment; this shews her profound humility, and at the same time the greatness of her faith, and the high opinion she had of the power of Christ. Her speedy and miraculous cure does not only display the divine virtue that was in our Saviour, but does likewife convince us, that with humility and faith we shall obtain of him every thing necessary to salvation. The more we think ourselves unworthy of God's grace, the more ready is he to bestow it on us. Another thing worthy to be taken notice of, is, that our Lord knew this woman had touched him, though she had not made her address to him; which shews that nothing is hid from him, and that this and all his miracles were done because it was his will they should be done. The refurrection of the daughter of Jairus, is a still more considerable effect of our Lord's infinite power; this miracle, with fome other of the like nature, does not fuffer us to doubt whether Christ could raise the dead, nor that he shall one day do the same for our sakes also, as he has promised us.

### C H A P. IX. 1-27.

ST Luke relates, I. The fending of the twelve apostles throughout Judea, and the instructions which our Lord gave them. II. The opinion that king Herod had of Christ. III. The miraculous multiplying of the five loaves and two fishes. IV. Our Lord's discourse with the apostles when he asked them their opinion concerning him, and forewarned

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ned hem them of his death, and exhorted them to prepare themselves for sufferings.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT we are to confider in the fending the apostles is, that Christ ordered them to go before him into Judea, in order to spread abroad the glad tidings of the Messiah's coming, and to prepare the Jews, by their preaching and by their miracles, for his reception. He was likewife willing, by this method, to prepare them for their future preaching of the gospel throughout the whole earth. But that which we are chiefly to observe in Christ's speech to them is, that the ministry of the fervants of God is only profitable to those that receive them; and that those who reject them, draw upon themselves a fevere but just condemnation. II. It appears from hence, fecondly, that they had a high opinion of our Lord among the Jews, fince they took him for Elias, or some other of the prophets; but it is a thing worth notice, that Herod, who was a wicked prince, and of the fect of the Sadducees, who denied the refurrection, should imagine that John the baptist, whom he had put to death, was rifen again. We must consider this as an effect of his remorfe of conscience, for having put to death that holy man. Though the ungodly reject the truths of religion, they are never firmly perfuaded of the truth of their own fentiments, and when their conscience is roused, acknowledge those very truths which they doubted of and even denied before. III. The miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, which fed several thousand men, is one of the most remarkable miracles our Saviour wrought; fince they were all so many witnesses of the surprising fact, and instruments in making it known to the world, which tended very much to confirm the truth of Christ's doctrine and his divine mission, and induce

gather from our Lord's discourse with his disciples, concerning the opinion men had of him, and what they themselves thought, is, that faith in Christ consists in looking upon him as the Messiah, and the Son of the living God. That he came into the world to suffer and to die. That no one can be his true disciple, without taking up his cross and being always ready to make a public and sincere profession of his faith. And lastly, That there is nothing of greater importance to us than the salvation of our souls; and that it would be of no advantage to us to gain the whole world, at the expence of our souls.

#### C H A P. IX. 28-62.

I. OUR Lord is transfigured in presence of three of his apostles; cures a lunatic whom his apostles could not cure; and tells them again, that he should be condemned to death. II. He teaches them humility, and blames them for hindering a man from casting out devils in his name, because he followed not them. III. He censures the inconsiderate zeal of two of his apostles; and returns an answer to three persons who desired to follow him.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE transfiguration of our Lord, and the glory with which the apostles saw him then surrounded, is a convincing proof of the truth and divinity of the gospel; as St Peter himself, who was present at that transfiguration, takes notice in the first chapter of his second epistle. The presence of Moses and Elias, who were seen with Jesus at that time, and who discoursed with him about what he was to suffer at Jerusalem, shews, that this was he whose coming had been foretold by the prophets. God caused a voice

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voice to be heard from heaven, after Moses and Elias were departed, to teach the apostles, and by them all mankind, that from thenceforth they were to hear Jefus only; and that he was infinitely greater than Moses and Elias, and all the prophets. Lastly, It is from hence evident, that those holy men, who had departed this life many ages before, were alive with God; and therefore we may conclude, that those who have ferved God faithfully in this life are not annihilated by death. We see in the cure of the lunatic, that the faith of the apostles was still very weak, as our Lord reproaches them; but that their faith grew ftronger afterwards, in proportion as they were better instructed, and as their prejudices wore off. As the weakness of the apostles faith was the reason they could not cure the lunatic, so our slips and failings proceed only from the want of faith; for which reaion, we ought to labour to be confirmed therein, and to befeech the Lord, that it may be more and more increased in us. From the lessons of humility which our Lord gave his disciples, let us learn, that haughty thoughts, and the love of worldly glory, are unworthy of Christians; that on the contrary, they ought to place their glory in humility, and efteem all those that believe in Christ, and that love him, even tho' they be mean and contemptible in the world. answer that our Lord gave St John, who would have hindered a man from casting out devils in Christ's name, because that person did not keep company with the apostles, teaches us, that we must never oppose, upon any pretence, those who labour fincerely to advance the kingdom of our Lord. We ought to pay a due regard to piety wherever we find it; fince every thing that is good must come from God. are weighty reflections to be made upon the reproof which Christ gave James and John, who, being transported with an indifcreet zeal, and with that aversion which

which the Jews bore to the Samaritans, were for bringing down fire from heaven upon those Samaritans that had refused to lodge their master. This is a warning to us, never to fuffer ourselves to be overcome by a false and blind zeal, such is always that zeal which inclines us to do evil to men; but to be always endued, as Christ himself was, with the spirit of meekness and forbearance towards all, and particularly towards fuch as are in error, and that entertain fentiments of religion different from our own. By the answers which Christ gave the three persons that would have followed him, he would have them to understand, first, that he did not promise the conveniencies of this life to his disciples. Secondly, That they must be prepared to forlake all things for the love of him, even such as are innocent and lawful, when they are a hindrance to the discharge of our duty. And thirdly, When men are once engaged in his service, they are bound to follow that call, and not to look back to the world.

### CHAP. X. 1-24.

HRIST chooses seventy disciples, sends them before him, gives them power to work miracles, and necessary instructions for their office; and denounces the judgments of God against those cities which had not repented upon his preaching and doing miracles in them. II. The seventy disciples give an account to Christ of the success of their journey and ministry; upon which occasion he foretels the destruction of the kingdom of Satan. III. He praises God that the gospel was preached and received by persons of mean rank, and inconsiderable in the eye of the world; and he represents to his disciples how happy they were in being instructed by him in the great truths of the gospel.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

I. W E may observe, that Christ, who had already chose twelve apostles, was pleased alfo to make choice of feventy disciples, and fend them into Judea, that the happy tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God might be spread with the greater. dispatch, and that they might be the better able to go and preach the same doctrine throughout all the earth afterwards. The instructions which he gave them shew, that the servants of God ought to exercife their office with fidelity, difinterestedness, and courage; that those whose heart is right, and who are of a peaceable disposition, will receive them; but that those who refuse to hear them, are inexcusable. II. The threatnings which Christ denounces against the cities of Gahlee, where he had preached and done miracles, are a warning to us, that those who receive the greatest favours from heaven, often abuse them in a shameful manner; and that those who have the gospel preached to them, and do not grow better by it, must expect the severest punishment. III. Upon what Christ said to the seventy disciples, when they gave him an account of the fuccess of their journey, and of the miracles which they had wrought, we may observe, that he foretold the speedy ruin of the kingdom of Satan, which actually happened foon after by the preaching of the gospel. He likewise declared to them, that thought it was a very glorious privilege to be able to cast out devils, they ought rather to reoice that their names were written in heaven; that is o fay, that they were the disciples of Jesus Christ, and that the joys and glories of heaven were referved for them. The advantage of belonging to God, and of being in the number of true believers, is infiitely more confiderable than the power of working miracles. IV. Let us also carefully attend to the Vol. III, K thanks

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thanks which Christ returned to God, that the gofpel was received by the mean and humble, whilf the great men of the world, and those who are looked upon as the wifest, did reject it. It is not to worldly persons, and those that have an high opinion of themselves, that God reveals himself; but it is to the meek and lowly, and to fuch as are of a fincere and honest heart. V. Let us also observe what our Lord affured his disciples of in such strong terms, that they were happy in being instructed by him, and in knowing those truths of the gospel, which were not known by the ancient prophets as they were by them. This advantage we enjoy in common with them; but let us remember at the same time, that if we do not make a good use of our happiness, such knowledge will only ferve to render us more miferable, and that it would be much better for us to have never enjoyed it.

# CHAP, X. 25-42.

h. HRIST answers one of the scribes, who asked I him, what he must do to obtain everlasting life. II. To teach that doctor of the law, that all men are our neighbours, he proposes to him the parable of a man that fell among thieves. III. Chris going to lodge in the house of Martha and Mary, takes occasion to commend the piety of Mary, who kept close to him, that she might hear him.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS portion of scripture furnishes us with the answer instructions. I. That the chief command a power God, and the sum of all religion, is, to love Go the par above all things, and our neighbours as ourselves. This ters ag is the way to sulfil the whole law, and to discharg peaks every duty; and this is what we are bound to do, and ke

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we defire to attain to true substantial holiness, and by that means to eternal life, II. That there is no man who is not our neighbour, and whom we ought net to love. This is what Christ teaches us by the parable of the Jew, who being wounded by thieves, was neither affifted by the prieft, nor by the Levite, tho' they were his own countrymen; but was relieved by a Samaritan, who was a stranger, and of a people hated by the Jews. The defign of Christ was thereby to shew, that all men, without exception, even strangers, and those that do not love us, are our neighbours; that we are obliged to love them all, to do good to them, and to fuccour the unfortunate with all our might, This was a clear and evident truth, which, however, the most learned of the Jewish doctors did not rightly comprehend. III. The third instruction is taken from that which is said in this chapter of Martha and Mary. The judgment our Lord passed upon the behaviour of those two sisters. teaches us, that our chief care ought to be to adhere to him, and to hearken to his word; and that the employments of this life, even fuch as are lawful, ought never to make us neglect the thing that is most important of all, the one only thing necessary. And if we would be happy, we must, like Mary, choose that good part which shall never be taken from us.

### C H A P. XI. 1-28.

HRIST instructs his disciples about prayer. II. He cures a demoniack, and returns an and opower of Satan he cast out devils. III. He proposes the parable of a man, into whom the evil spirit enters again, after it had gone out of him. IV. He scharg peaks of the happiness of those who hear his word do, and keep it,

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE first instruction which the Saviour of the world here gives us, relates to prayer, and particularly to the Lord's prayer. This divine prayer having Jesus Christ for its author, and including all that is most important for us to ask, first, with respect to the glory of God, and in the next place to our own wants, as well for the body as the foul. we ought to present it to God with all possible reverence and attention; and at the same time, with an extraordinary degree of confidence; fince, when we ask what our Lord has commanded us to ask, we cannot doubt but our prayers, as to the matter of them, are agreeable to the will of God: Our Lord teaches us moreover, that if when we defire any thing of men with great earnestness, we prevail upon them to grant our petitions, much more shall we, by our prayers, obtain from God, who is our father, true, that is, spiritual bleffings: all this ought to stir us up to pray with earnestness and zeal, and not to faint in this holy exercise. II. The blasphemy of the Pharifees, who attributed to the devil the miracles which Christ wrought by virtue of the spirit of God, teaches us, that men who have a wicked heart, defeat the most powerful means made use of by God to overcome the hardness of their hearts, and that they are even more and more confirmed in their wickedness. III. The similitude of the evil spirit, that enters again into the man after he had been cast out, shews what would happen to the Jews, who had not laid hold of the advantage of Christ's presence, and of his miracles; namely, that they would fall into greater obdurateness, and would feel the divine vengeance: This is likewife what happens to all fuch, who, after having received the grace of God, do refift its motions, and engage again in fin. Let us learn, laftly,

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end the o from the answer which our Saviour made to the woman that admired his discourses, that the most glorious and the most advantageous thing to ourselves, is to hear the word of God, and to observe what it commands, as is expressed in these words, Blessed are they that bear the word of God, and keep it.

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# C H A P. XI. 29-54.

I. O UR Lord reproves the unbelief of the Jews, by fetting before them the example of the Ninevites, and of the queen of Sheba. II. He tells them, that such their unbelief could not hinder his doctrine, which was a light to lighten mankind, from being preached; and he shews, that in order to receive any benefit from it, our eye must be pure and single; which is as much as to say, our minds must be free and disengaged from prejudice and passion. III. Being invited to dine with a Pharisee, he declaims against the scribes and Pharisees, reproaching them for their hypocrify, pride and insidelity, and threatning them with the judgments of God.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE are taught, by the example of the queen of Sheba, and that of the Ninevites, that those to whom God has granted a greater degree of light, and more considerable opportunities of salvation, have reason to expect a more severe condemnation if they neglect those advantages, and persist in their insidelity. II. What our Saviour said of the candle set in a candlestick, and of the eye, which is the light of the body, signifies these two things: one is, that he had made known his doctrine to his disciples, to the end they might make it known to the world; and the other, that our minds must be rightly disposed, and our hearts pure and sincere, in order to receive

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and to understand the excellency of this doctrine. Ill' We have feen our Lord reproaching the Pharifees for observing an external purity, for affecting great appearances of virtue, piety, zeal, and humility, and for shewing a great respect to the memory of the prophets, whilst their hearts were filled with pride and covetousness, whilst they persecuted those whom God had fent to them, and hindered men from believing in him; for which reason, he threatens them with total destruction. Hereby we may see in how great guilt men involve themselves, when they suffer pride and covetousness to possess their hearts, when they reject the word of God, and turn others away from faith and holiness, which is the highest pitch of wickedness. Above all, this discourse of our Lord teaches us, that God abhors hypocrify; that those who go no farther than to an outward purity, and neglect that of the heart and conscience, are an abomination to him. Let us therefore study true holiness. Let us remember that God chiefly has respect to the inward parts, and that the only way to please him, is to have an upright heart, and to be filled with charity; to be truly humble, to receive his word with submission, and to contribute all that in us lies to bring other men to faith and falvation.

# C H A P. XII. 1-34.

HIS chapter contains an excellent discourse of our Lord, in which, I. He exhorts his disciples not to dissemble the truths which they had learned of him, but to declare them publickly; and that the fear of men might not hinder them from so doing, he warns them to fear none but God, and to make an open profession of the truth; and promises to defend and affist them when they should appear before the great men of the world. II. Upon occasion of

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a man who had a dispute with another about an inheritance, he declaims against coverousness, shewing by the parable of a rich man, the folly of such as care for nothing but heaping up wealth; and telling them, that they should not be anxious for the necessaries of life, but depend upon providence, and be chiefly solicitous for what relates to the kingdom of God. III. He assures his disciples, that though they were weak, and but few in number, they should not fear the want of any thing that was necessary for them; and he exhorts them to make a right use of worldly goods.

#### REFLECTIONS.

CHRIST instructs us here about the profession of truth, and the love of worldly goods. Upon the first head, we see that Christians, and especially the ministers of Jesus Christ, ought to make a public profession of the truth, without standing in fear of men; fince men can only kill the body, whereas God can caft both foul and body into hell. Whereby our Lord, in the clearest manner, settles the distinction between foul and body, the immortality of the foul, and the punishments of the wicked in the life to come. Our Lord declares moreover, that God watches over those who fear him, and who suffer for his fake; that he affifts them by his spirit; that at the last day he will own them for his, that shall have had the courage to call themselves his disciples; but that he will not own those who, through fear of death, shall not have dared to make an open confes-These are very powerful confifion of their faith. derations, to animate us to a free and fincere profession of Christianity. II. Let us seriously reslect upon what our Lord fays concerning the love of worldly goods, and upon the parable of the man that had heaped up great wealth, but died at the K 4

time he thought to enjoy it. Christ was willing to shew thereby, that it is a great folly to care only for gathering of riches, which we must leave when we come to die, and to neglect the acquiring heavenly goods, which are solid and eternal. He has likewise exhorted us not to disquiet ourselves for the wants of the body, but to trust to providence, which provides for the necessities of all creatures; to seek, before all things, the kingdom of God; and instead of engaging all our care for the things of the world, and setting our hearts upon them, to employ our wealth in alms, in order to secure to ourselves the possession of an everlasting treasure.

# CHAP. XII. 35-59.

I. CHRIST exhorts his disciples to watch, and to be continually prepared for his coming. II. He represents to them, that the duties of which he had discoursed, related to them in a particular manner; they being as it were stewards, appointed in the house of their master, for the instruction of others; and that having received a greater knowledge of the will of God, they would be treated with greater severity if they did not perform it. III. He warns them, that great troubles would arise in the world upon the account of his doctrine. IV. He laments the blindness of the Jews, who did not acknowledge that the time of the Messiah was come; and he exhorts them to lay hold of that opportunity, and to reconcile themselves with God whilst it was in their power.

### REFLECTIONS.

LET us learn from hence, I. That fince we are ignorant when Christ will come, and may be called every moment to give up our accounts to him,

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him, we ought always to watch, and to apply ourselves incessantly to our duty, to the end, that when he comes he may find us employed in well-II. That those to whom God has given the knowledge of himself, and chiefly the ministers of the church, are bound to use it for the good of others; and to the glory of their mafter, if they would not be punished as unfaithful servants; that, in general, he who knows the will of God, and does it not, shall be treated with greater severity, and that God will require a greater account of those, to whom he shall have granted more light and more grace. What our Lord fays, that he was come to kindle fire and division in the world, does not fignify that he came with fuch a delign, nor that the gospel tends to fet men at variance; fince on the contrary, the coming of Jesus Christ, and the gospel, have no other end, but to cause peace to reign: but his meaning was, that mankind by their malice would take occasion from his doctrine to hate and persecute one another. Our Lord warns his disciples of this, that they might not be staggered when the thing should come to pass; wherefore neither ought we to be any more furprized, when we fee that troubles arise in the world upon the account or pretence of religion. Jesus told the Jews, that they might easily discern the time of the manifestation of the Messiah was come; but we have much more reason to be convinced of this truth, because every thing that has happened fince that time, has tended to confirm it. We should therefore be entirely inexcufable if we did not make a better use than the Jews did of the happiness we enjoy in living at a time when the mercy of God is for clearly revealed; and haften to make our peace with him, and to prevent his judgments, before we are called to appear in his presence: CHAP.

# CHAP. XIII.

OUR Lord exhorts the Jews to take warning from that which happened to certain Galileans, whom Pilate had put to death whilst they were offering their facrifices, and from those eighteen persons who had been killed by the fall of a tower. II. To this end he proposes the parable of the barren III. He cures a woman that had been ill eighteen years, and so bent that she could not stand upright. IV. He proposes the similitude of a grain of mustard-seed, and of leaven. V. Answers the question that was asked him, whether there were but few that would be faved; exhorts us to enter betimes into the way of falvation, and foretels, that the unbelieving Jews, who had not improved by his presence, should be shut out of the kingdom of God, whilft other nations should be admitted into VI. Being informed that Herod fought his life, he declares, he did not fear that cunning and artful prince; tells them, his ministry was drawing towards a conclusion, and that he should really be put to death in a short time; but that he should suffer death in Jerusalem, and not in Galilee, where Herod reigned: upon which account he deplores the ingratitude, obduracy, and destruction of that city.

### REFLECTIONS.

CHRIST teaches us in this chapter, that we must not imagine, that those who have some great misfortune befal them, are always the most criminal; nor that those are better than others whom God is pleased to spare; but that he often bears with the guilty for wise and good reasons, whilst he afflicts others who are not so great sinners as they: wherefore, instead of condemning those whom

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God visits, and flattering ourselves, we ought to repent and grow better by the misfortunes that happen to them, left we should be handled more feverely than they. The meaning of the parable of the barren fig-tree was, that God, who had already shewn great patience towards the Jews, did then make use of the last means for their conversion, by causing them to be called to repentance by Christ himself; after which they were to be destroyed, as it actually happened in a few years. This parable fets before us God's patience towards finners, making use of the most efficacious methods to bring them to repentance; but that by their obstinacy and impenitence, they draw upon themselves the utmost miseries. Christ having healed a woman that went double for eighteen years together, there were some who were offended at his doing this miracle on the fabbath-day. What Christ says to convince them of their ignorance, as well as of their wickedness, teaches us, that the practice of charity and good works. is the most necessary thing in religion; that these duties are always in feafon; and that we should let flip no occasion of discharging them, though there should be people of so evil a disposition as to be offended at them. The parables of the mustardfeed, and of the leaven, fignify, that though the gospel was received by very few, whilst our Saviour was in the world, and the beginnings of his kingdom were very weak, it should be established in all places, and in a very short time; as it fell out accordingly: which proves the divinity of the gof-We ought carefully to meditate upon the answer which our Lord returned to those that asked him, whether there would be but few people faved: Strive, fays he, to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. These words teach us, that instead of

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putting vain and curious questions about any thing which God has referved the knowledge of to himfelf, and particularly about the falvation of others, our principal care ought to be to attain it ourselves; that we ought to take continual pains for it, and to begin early; that when the opportunity is loft, we shall not be admitted any more; and that then, all that will remain to the wicked for their part, will be nothing but remorfe and despair, to see themselves excluded from the bleffings of heaven through their own fault. We have feen that our Lord feared neither the craft nor cruelty of Herod, because he knew that he was not to die in Galilee, but at Je-This shews us, that wicked men cannot always execute their own designs, much less hinder what God has purposed, and that we need fear nothing when we walk in our calling. Laftly, the tenderness wherewith our Lord laments the ingratitude and destruction of Jerusalem, by saying, that he would have screened the Jews from the judgments of God, but they would not; shews very plainly, that God has no other views nor defigns, with regard to men, but those of love; and that no evil befals them but what they bring upon themselves, by despising his goodness, and by slighting and rejecting the offers of his grace.

# CHAP. XIV.

I. O UR Lord dining with a Pharifee cures a dropfical person; and proves, that men ought not to be offended because that miracle was done on a sabbath-day. II. He gives lessons of humility and charity to those who sat at table with him. III. He proposes to them the parable of the feast, to which those that were invited would not go. IV. He declares, that those who would be his disciples, should

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THE cure which Christ granted to the man that had the dropfy, shews, that he was always ready to do good and to relieve the afflicted; and that there was no fort of diftemper which he did not cure; and what he faid to those who did not approve of his working miracles upon the fabbath-day, fhews, that we must avoid hypocrify and rash censures, and lay hold upon all occasions that offer, to do works of kindness and charity. The second lesson relates to humility and charity; Christ recommends both those duties, when he tells us, that they who endeavour to exalt themselves shall be abased before God, and even before men; whilft those that humble themfelves shall be exalted: and when he exhorts us not to imitate those worldly people, who only welcome the rich and their friends, but despise and neglect the poor and unfortunate. The parable of the feaft, fignifies, that the Jews, and especially the chief among them, were to be rejected for not embracing the invitations which God made them by Jesus Christ and his apostles; and that those who were the most despised, and even the Gentiles themselves, should receive those favours which the Jews had rejected. This also relates to Christians who do not answer their call, and who, upon frivolous excuses, and from the attachment they have to the things of the earth, neglect the offers of divine mercy, and by this means lose the right they have to salvation. Lastly, Christ warns us most expressly, that, in order to be his disciples, we must first learn to renounce every thing that may hinder us from following him. It is with this view, that he proposes the parable of a

man that was going to build a tower, and that of one king who was going to fight with another. By which he teaches us, that we must not lightly or inconsiderately engage in his service; and that before we assume the name of Christians, and take that profession and vow upon us, we should examine ourselves, and see whether we are firmly resolved to be faithful to him; and whether we shall have the courage to resist temptation, to bear our cross, and use our utmost endeavours to bring others to faith and piety by our prudence and good examples.

#### CHAP. XV.

THE Pharifees being offended at our Saviour's eating with finners, he proposes three parables to them. I. That of the lost sheep. II. That of the piece of money that was lost. And, III. That of the prodigal son, His design was to shew by these three parables, that God calls sinners to repentance, and that therefore the Pharisees were to blame to find fault with his keeping company with those people.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE three similitudes contained in this chapter, tend all to the same purpose; which is, to set before our eyes the great mercies of God to sinners, and his endeavour to bring them to repentance; and to shew, that as their conversion is very acceptable to him, and the holy angels are rejoiced at it, all such as love God ought likewise to be glad, and even to contribute every thing in their power towards it; and not to be forry or jealous, as were the Pharisees, who could not bear to see Jesus in the company of men of an evil life. This is what is chiefly denoted by the parable of the prodigal son, by whom our

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Lord represents those that were great sinners, or counted fuch; the return of that fon to his father's house, represents the conversion of such sinners. The tenderness with which his father received him, shews, that God takes pleasure in the repentance and amendment of finners, and that he is full of goodness towards them. The jealonfy and concern which the eldest fon shewed, because his brother had been received so kindly and joyfully, represents the temper of those Pharisees who thought themselves better than other men, and who were offended at our Lord's eating and keeping company with publicans and finners. This is the meaning of that instructive parable, which furnishes us with several very useful reflections. We there observe how sinners err from the right way, and their criminal abuse of the grace of God; we fee, likewise, the goodness of God in chastifing them, in order to bring them back to their duty; the return of those that come to God by repentance; the pardon which he grants them, and the joy that their conversion ought to excite in all pious and charitable minds. To this parable all of us ought most feriously to attend; reading it carefully over and over. and meditating upon all its parts; but finners, especially, are bound to apply this parable to themselves, that they may be encouraged thereby to return to God by a fpeedy and fincere repentance.

## CHAP. XVI.

I. CHRIST shews, by the parable of the unfaithful steward, the use we ought to make of the good things of the world. II. Next, he represents, that the love of riches is very dangerous; and reproves the Pharises for their covetousness, and for opposing the establishment of the kingdom of God from the time of John the baptist. III. And lastly.

lastly, to illustrate and confirm what he had said about the use of riches, he adds the parable of the wicked rich man.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS whole fixteenth chapter of St Luke, tends to teach us how we must use the good things of this world. What is here faid of this unfaithful steward, who, to make himself friends, discharged his mafter's debtors of part of what they owed him, must not be understood as if Christ commended the proceeding of that man, fince fuch an action would be a manifest injustice and breach of trust. only defigned to teach us thereby, that as this fleward raifed himself friends by the goods of his master, before he left his fervice, fo we ought to fecure for ourselves an entrance into a better life, by employing our wealth to pious and charitable purposes. It is to stir us up to this duty, that Christ fays, that those who cannot make a right use of the corruptible things of this life, do thereby shew that they are unworthy to possess heavenly things. It is with the same view he declares, that we cannot serve God and fet our heart upon riches at the same time; this he proves by the example of the Pharifees, who were covetous; and who, although they had a very high efteem of themselves, were abominable in the fight of God, and the professed enemies of his kingdom. But this is what he particularly aims at in the parable of the wicked rich man and Lazarus; whereby our Lord represents what happens to those, who, instead of affisting the miserable, employ their wealth in gratifying their own luxury and fenfuality. Our Lord plainly intimates, that pomp, effeminacy, a love of pleasures, and a want of charity, lead men to hell and destruction, even without the commisfion of great and enormous crimes. Befides which,

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we fee in this parable, that as the condition of men is very different in this life, so it will likewise be after death; and that we cannot judge of the happiness or milery of men, by what happens to them in this world; we discover, that the righteous enjoy sweet repose after their death, whilft the wicked are tormented; and that the condition of them both is unchangeable. The answer which the patriarch Abrabam returned to the wicked rich man, who prayed him to fend Lazarus to his brethren, is a leffon to us, that God gives us, during this life, by his holy word, means sufficient to avoid destruction; that those who do not lay hold of these means, are without excuse; that they must not expect that God should work miracles for their conversion; and that although he should, yet such miracles will not convince them. All these instructions are of the utmost importance; and we can do nothing more useful than feriously to reflect upon them. Die fervan e. that we do no more than pare of co

# CHAP. XVII.

CHRIST speaks, I. Of offences, of forgiving injuries, of the efficacy of faith, and of the obligation we are under to do what God commands us, without pretending to merit thereby. II. He cures the ten lepers. III. He answers the Pharisees, who asked him when the kingdom of God should come; and tells them, that the kingdom of God was already among them, though they did not observe it. IV. Hence he takes occasion to warn those that heard him not to follow false Christs; and to tell them, that the time would come, that they should regret the loss of those advantages which they should regret the loss of the should regret the loss of the should regret the loss of the l

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE instructions contained in this chapter, are the following: I. That the giving scandal or of. fence, is a great fin; that as men are made, it must needs be that offences come; but that those who are the occasion of them shall receive the punishment. II. That we ought not to bear any grudge against those that offend us, but that we must pardon them, and even pardon them always, though they should injure us very often. HI. That faith being as necel. fary, in order to please God and obtain salvation, as it was formerly to work miracles, we should strengthen ourselves more and more therein, and, with the apoftle, beseech the Lord to increase our faith. IV. That being the fervants of God, we ought to do all that fuch a master commands us, and to do it with zeal, and, at the fame time, with deep humility, remembering that we are but unworthy and unprofitable fervants, that we do no more than part of our duty; that therefore we can plead no merit; and that if God vouchsafes to reward our obedience, it is in consequence of his pure favour and bounty. V. The principal reflection to be made upon the cure of the ten lepers, is, that there was but one who came back to thank Christ, and to give glory to God; and that this person was a Samaritan, who had more piety and gratitude than the rest, who were Jews, Men wish to be delivered when they are in pain or fufferings, but as foon as they have obtained what they defire, most of them presently forget the favour God has granted them, and become unthankful Those who are fincerely affected with the mercies God bellows upon them, treasure them up in their memory, and express their acknowledgment and love to him, not only by continual thanksgivings, but chiefly by their obedience, and by the good use

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they make of his favours. What Christ said to the Jews, that the kingdom of God was not to come with splendor; that it was already come, and even was among them, is enough to shew, that the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is altogether spiritual and heavenly; and that those, who, like us, are to happy as to have this kingdom in the midst of them, should take care that they do not fall into the same sin as did the Jews, which was, not to acknowledge their happiness, nor to make a right use of it; which, nevertheless, is but too usual. For which purpose, let us consider what our Lord adds in this chapter, namely, that the Jews would foon repent their neglecting the advantage of his prefence, and that they would be overtaken by divine vengeance, as the inhabitants of the first world were by the deluge, and as the fire from heaven overtook the people of Sodom. This warning concerns us as well as the Jews: those among us who have flighted the precious advantages we enjoy, and the feafon of God's forbearance and mercy, will be thus surprised in their blindness and security, and will perish in their impenitency. Since now our Lord has forewarned us of these things, let us reflect upon them continually; and, in expectation of his coming, let us live in watchfulness, in prayer, and in the exercise of every good work, as he himfelf advises.

# CHAP. XVIII. 1-17.

I. OUR Lord proposes the parable of the unjust judge. II. That of the Pharisee and the publican. And, III. He lays his hands upon little children that were brought to him.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

ST Luke informs us, at the very entrance of this eighteenth chapter, that the end of the parable of the unjust judge, is to teach us, that we must pray always, and without fainting. This is what we learn by our Saviour's expressions; namely, that if men, and even men as wicked as that unjust judge, fuffer themselves to be overcome at last by prayers and repeated folicitations, God, who is righteoufness and goodness itself, will much more hearken to the prayers that are offered up to him with zeal and perseverence. But the chief aim of our Lord, was to convince us thereby, that God hears the cries and prayers of his elect, and that he will take fevere vengeance on all fuch as unjustly oppress them. By the parable of the Pharifee and the publican, Christ would give us to understand, that such who had a favourable opinion of themselves, like the Pharisees, and despised others, were very odious to the Lord, by reason of their pride and hypocrify; and that those who are looked upon as the greatest finners, become the objects of his mercy, when they are possessed with profound humility and fincerely repent, like the publican who is here mentioned; who, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto beaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a finner! Besides which, the example of this Pharisee, who boasted that he was neither an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer; that he fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that he possessed, but who was not justified before God, proves, that great and crying fins are not the only hindrances of mens falvation; that men may be free from great crimes, and have even an appearance of piety, and yet be rejected by God, if their heart be filled with pride, covetoufness, or other secret passions. ly,

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ly, We may make three observations upon our Lord's laying his hands upon the children that were brought to him, and his praying for them. The first is, That the age of little children does not hinder our Lord from loving and blessing them. The second, That in devoting them to God by prayer, and the ordinance of baptism, we conform ourselves to what Christ did on this occasion. The third, That the kingdom of God is only reserved for such as are children in innocence, meekness, and simplicity, and who receive the gospel with such holy dispositions.

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# C H A P. XVIII. 18-43.

1. OUR Lord returns an answer to a rich young man, who asked him what he must do to be saved. From whence he takes occasion to say, that riches would obstruct the salvation of many people; and he makes glorious promises to those that will forsake worldly goods for the love of him. II. He forestels his sufferings. And, III. He restores sight to a blind man near fericho.

## REFLECTIONS.

WHAT we are to gather from the discourse between our Lord and the rich young man mentioned in this chapter, is, I. That we cannot obtain everlasting life, without keeping the commandments of God. II. That there are certain seasons wherein we are bound to forsake all we have, and expose ourselves to poverty and persecution. III. The surprise and forrow that seized this young man, after hearing what Christ had said to him, verifies our Saviour's remark upon this occasion, that the good things of this life are often a great obstacle to our salvation; because, those who have them, commonly set their heart upon them. Whence it appears,

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IV. That if we be not called, as were the apoffles, to leave all things to follow Christ, we ought to avoid fetting our affections upon the perishable things of this life, and employ them in affifting the miferable; and then we shall partake, both in this life and the next, of the rewards that our Saviour promifes those that shall have renounced the love of riches. It is next to be observed, that in proportion as the time of our Saviour's death drew near, he spoke more plainly of it to the apostles, to the end they might be less surprised at it: But the apostles, notwithstanding what he had faid to them on feveral occasions, could not comprehend that he was to die; which proceeded from their prejudices, and the opinion they had taken up, that, as the Messiah, he was to reign gloriously here upon earth. It must be observed, upon giving fight to the blind man here spoken of, that Christ, by curing this man, who stiled him the fon of David, which was another name among the Jews for Messiah, proved that he was really the Messiah. Lastly, Christ wrought new miracles towards the end of his life, and as he drew near to Jegusalem, in order to give fresh proofs of his divine mission to his disciples, and to the people; and in order also to lessen the offence which his cross and his death was quickly to give them.

## C H A P. XIX. 1-28.

heads. I. The history of the conversion of Zaccheus. II. The parable of the ten pieces of money.

## REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three things chiefly to be observed in the history of Zaccheus. The first, That Jesus

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Jesus Christ came to call sinners to repentance; and that those persons whom the Jews looked upon as great finners, and with whom they would keep no correspondence, such, for instance, as the publicans, should be received into covenant with God. The second, That Christ communicates himself to those that feek him; and that when he offers himfelf to us, and calls us to him, we should obey his call with readiness and joy, as Zaccheus did. The third, That those who are possessed of ill-gotten goods, ought to restore them; and, that the rich are particularly obliged to be charitable to the poor. As for the parable of the man that was going a long journey, and left ten pounds, that is to fay, feveral fums of money in the hands of his fervants; our Lord proposed it, as St Luke observes, I. To undeceive those that thought he would be declared king, and that his kingdom would be attended with worldly pomp and And, II. To make them comprehend that fplendor. he should be rejected; but, that such as would not fubmit themselves to him, should feel the effects of his power, and undergo the punishment of their rebellion; whilft those that have served him faithfully shall be exalted to great glory. The use we are to make of this parable, is to observe from thence, first, that God grants us his light and grace, to the end that every one of us, according to his station, may improve them to his glory, and to the falvation of others. Secondly, That some make a right use of his grace, and others abuse it. Thirdly, That when our Lord shall come to judge mankind, he will gloriously reward those that shall have employed his gifts in the manner most agreeable to his intentions, but will punish with rigour and justice, the ingratitude and treachery of those that have abused them.

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CHAP.

#### CHAP. XIX. 29-48.

MRIST makes his royal entry into Ferufalem. II. He weeps for the destruction of that city. III. He drives out of the temple those that profaned it.

#### REFLECTIONS.

CHRIST was pleased to make his entry into Ferusalem, the Sunday before his death, to shew that he was that king spoken of by the prophets; but he did it after a very plain manner, riding upon a young als, that it might appear that his kingdom was not of this world. This circumstance must have made the greater impression upon the apostles, as Christ, telling them where they should find the ass, had given them a new proof of his infinite knowledge. We ought very feriously to reflect upon this event, in which we fo fenfibly perceive the glory of Jesus Christ, and, at the same time his perfect meekness; and it should engage us to rejoice, and praise the Lord, as did those who formerly attended Christ, when they faw his miracles, if we duly consider what our Saviour has done to redeem mankind, and establish his kingdom in the world. We are next to observe, that when our Saviour came in this manner to Jerusalem, he lamented with tears the desolation of that city, and the calamities that were foon to fall upon the Jews, because they had mistaken and neglected the time of God's gracious visitation. was a very plain proof of the goodness of the Lord, even to fuch as had rejected him; and who, that very week, were to crucify him; and it shews us likewise, that none perish but through their own fault, and because they do not lay hold of the season in which God visits them, and offers them his grace; and that

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that therefore we should know the things that belong to our peace before they be hid from our eyes. Lastly, Christ, by driving out of the temple those that fold and traded in it, made appear his divine authority, as well as his great zeal. This action of our Saviour fuggefts two reflections: one is, that we grievously offend God, and expose ourselves to his wrath, when we behave ourselves irreverently in places fet apart for public worship, and when our worship of him is false and hypocritical: this is infinitely more odious to him than the abuse that was introduced among the Jews, of buying and felling in the temple the things necessary for facrifices. The other is, that we ought, in imitation of our Saviour, to oppose impiety and irreligion, and promote with zeal the glory of God, and the cause of religion.

## CHAP. XX. 1-18.

I. CHRIST answers the chief among the Jews, who examined him whence he had his authority. And, II. Proposes to them the parable of the husbandmen.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE are to remark, that when the Jews demanded of Christ whence he received his authority, our Lord, knowing that this question did not proceed from a sincere desire to be informed, but only from a design to surprise him, did not think proper to answer them. But to convince them that their ignorance was affected and malicious, and that they might easily have discerned that his authority came from God; he asked them whether the baptism of John was from heaven, or of men; to which they made no reply, not daring to speak their thoughts. The silence of the Pharisees was a sufficient proof of their hypocrisy

hypocrify and malice, and that a direct answer would not have satisfied them. God never refuses to reveal himself to those who have an honest heart, and sincerely defire to know the truth. But those who only feek a pretence to reject it, are given up to their ignorance and perverfeness, especially when they have already had fufficient means of knowing the truth, and have rejected it. By the similitude of the hufbandmen our Lord designed figuratively to represent, 1. That the chief of the Jews would crucify him, as their fathers had killed the prophets. 2. That he should nevertheless become the supreme head and king of the church. 3. That the Jews would shortly be overtaken with God's judgments, and deprived of his covenant. 4. That the gospel would be preached to the Gentiles with furprising success, and that they should enjoy all the privileges of being in covenant with God. This prophetic parable was clearly explained in the glory to which our Lord, after his refurrection and alcension, was exalted, by the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. However, that which befel the Jews, ought to be an example to us, and teach us, that Christians who despise God's grace, and disobey the gospel, shall not go unpunished, fince they no less reject Christ, than the Jews themfelves did formerly.

# CHAP. XX. 19-47.

THE fecond part of this chapter contains the four following heads. I. The answer of Jesus Christ to the question, whether it were lawful to pay tribute to the emperor. II. His answer to another question of the Sadducees about the resurrection. Ill. The question he himself put to the Pharisees, concerning the Messiah's being called the son of David.

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IV. A warning to take care of the scribes and Phari-

REFLECTIONS.

THE design of the Pharisees, in asking our Sa-viour whether it was lawful to pay tribute to the emperor, was to lay a fnare for him. wanted a pretence to accuse him either of being an enemy to Cefar, if he should fay that tribute was not to be paid; or no friend to his own nation, if he should tay it was. But Jesus, by his profound wisdom, difcovered and avoided the fnare; bidding them render to Cefar the things which are Cefar's, and unto God the things which are God's. Let us learn from hence, to fubmit to the authority of princes, ftrictly paying that obedience and allegiance which is due to them; and at the fame time religiously discharging our duty to God. We may observe the same wisdom in his answer to the Sadducees, who thought to have puzzled him by their question about the resurrection. He lets them know, that their question was trifling, fince after the refurrection we shall be immortal, and like unto angels, and that there will be no marrying in the next life. Then he shewed them that the dead must rife, by putting them in mind, that God declares himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Facob, even after their death; whence it follows, that fince God is not the God of the dead but of the living, those holy patriarchs, and all those who imitate their faith, subsist after death, and that they thall rife again. This discourse of our Lord, ought fully to convince us, that the dead will be raised, and should engage us to live pure and godly lives; to the end that, as our Saviour fays, we may be in the number of those who shall be thought worthy to partake of eternal life, and of the refurrection of the righteous. The question which Christ put to the scribes, how the Messiah could be both the

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the fon and lord of David, tended to shew them, that the dignity of the Messiah was much greater than they imagined; and though they thought themselves the best interpreters of the ancient prophecies, their ignorance was very great in this and many other instances. Nevertheless, he would not explain that question to them more fully, because it would have been useless, by reason of their unteachable temper. Thus does our Lord give up to their own ignorance those who will not be instructed. What our Saviour says against the scribes and Pharisees, shews, that coverousness, pride and hypocrify, are most odious vices; and that we ought to beware of those in whom they are found, and most carefully avoid the same vices ourselves.

## CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter contains four things. I. The judgment which Christ passed upon the poor widow's offering. II. What he said to his disciples concerning the signs which should precede the destruction of ferusalem, and the end of the world. III. He represents how terrible this destruction would be. IV. He exhorts his disciples to watch and pray, and live soberly, that they might not be surprised by his coming.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. THE judgment which Christ passed upon the offering of that widow, who threw two small pieces of money into a box, in which private persons put what they had a mind to give for the service of the temple, teaches us, that what we devote to pious and charitable uses is pleasing to God, when given with a willing mind; and that the offerings of the poor, when made heartily, and according to their power.

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are as well received as those of the rich. II. We are to confider, that whatever our Lord had foretold of the figns that should precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, came to pass at the time, and in the manner he had foretold. Several false teachers appeared, who took upon them the name of the Meffiah; Judea was ruined by war, by famine, and by pestilence; the disciples of our Lord were persecuted by the Jews; the Romans besieged and took Jerusalem, and destroyed both it and the temple; the inhabitants of the city were reduced to the utmost extremity, were put to the fword, and exposed to all the dreadful calamities of war. The remains of this people were difperfed over all the world, and are so to this day, and Jerusalem never recovered from its ruins. And all these things came to pass at the time Christ had foretold, that is, about forty years after his crucifixion. Such clear and express predictions as thefe, which have been and still are fo exactly verified by the event, will not fuffer us to doubt that Christ was sent from God, and that his doctrine is truly divine. This destruction of God's once favourite people, and of a city which he had chofen to place his name in, ought to inspire us all with fear; and as this destruction can be ascribed to nothing but their fin in rejecting and crucifying our Lord; this was a proof that he was the Messiah. Thereby we may also discover what Christians are to expect, who reject him by their unbelief and disobedience. What we read in this chapter should remind us of the end of the world, and the day of judgment; of the horror and despair of the wicked, and the joy of the righteous at that day. Lastly, Our Lord informs us, that the way to be prepared for his coming, is to live foberly, and to watch and pray continually. This is what our Lord exhorts us to in the following expressions, which conclude this discourse: Take beed

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to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man.

# C H A P. XXII. 1-38.

THE evangelist begins here the history of Christ's passion; and relates, I. The agreement Judas made with the Jews to betray our Lord. II. How Christ celebrated the passover, and instituted the holy sacrament. III. His prediction of the treachery of Judas. IV. What he said to the apostles, when they disputed who of them should be greatest in their master's kingdom. V. Our Lord's foretelling St Peter's fall and repentance, and warning his disciples of his approaching death.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE first reflection to be made here, relates to the resolution Judas took of betraying his master to the Jews: and though Jesus gave him to understand that he knew his design, this perfidious disciple would not defift from putting it in execution. As it was the love of money which induced him to commit this treacherous action, we fee plainly that this passion, which men are apt to think not very dangerous, blinds men, and hardens their hearts to fuch a degree, as renders them capable of the worlt of fins, and proof against all arguments to the contrary. II. Our Lord's keeping the passover with his disciples, and instituting the bleffed sacrament, suggest these two reflections; first, that he observed to the end of his life all that was prescribed in the Jewish law; which should be an argument with us not to neglect

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neglect or despise any divine institution: and secondly, that we should reverence and respect this holy facrament which our Saviour then appointed to remain, even to the end of the world, a memorial of his passion and death, and ought to partake of this holy facrament with true devotion, as often as we approach the Lord's table. III. It is to be obferved, that our Lord's speaking at his last supper of the coming of the kingdom of God, gave occasion to his disciples to ask him which of them should be the greatest in his kingdom, which they supposed would be a temporal one. But Jesus exhorted them to correct their carnal notions of his kingdom, and to entertain more humble thoughts; promiting, however, to exalt them to great glory if they continued faithful unto the end. These lessons of humility and renunciation of worldly greatness, which Christ gave his apostles so often, teach us, that it is not lawful eagerly to feek after honour and glory; but, as we are the disciples of a master who was humility itself, we ought not to think of being raifed one above another; and should ever remember, that the true glory to which we should aspire, is that which Christ reserves in the kingdom of God for such as shall have been faithful to him, and continued obedient in the midst of those temptations and trials to which they shall have been exposed. Our Lord foretold that St Peter would deny him; but he affured him at the same time, that he had prayed for him, that his faith should not fail. The sequel confirmed the truth both of the prediction and promife. We are extremely weak; know but little of ourselves; and our greatest danger arises from presumption: but that which either fecures us from falling, or raifes us up again, is a prudent distrust of ourselves, and reliance on the grace of God. Let us therefore with great humility and fervency implore this grace, and

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pray to God that he would vouchfafe to fecure us against our own weakness, and support us in such manner that our faith may not fail.

# C H A P. XXII. 39-71

I. HRIST's agony in the garden. II. He is I taken by Judas. III. St Peter denies him, and afterwards weeps bitterly for his fin. IV. Jesus is condemned before the Jewish council.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I N the relation St Luke gives of our Lord's fufferings in the garden, we may observe the great forrow of his foul, his prayers to God, and his refignation. The anguish and trouble he endured, shew that he was subject to all the infirmities of our nature; the prospect of his approaching death filled him with fore amazement; he even needed an angel to strengthen him; but this trouble and anguish had nothing in it but what was innocent; and therefore we must not imagine his sufferings were like those of the wicked, or that God was angry with him: his prayers teach us to feek our comfort and strength, by addressing ourselves to God under affliction; and his refignation to the will of his father, should teach us to submit ourselves in all things, even in the forest trials, to what God shall be pleased to do with us. After a state of distress, like that of our Saviour, we should never be discouraged in our afflictions, if, like him, we refign ourselves intirely to the divine will. II. From the manner of our Saviour's being apprehended, we may observe, that though he knew the design of Judas, and could have escaped death, yet he delivered himself into the hands of the Jews; being refolved to die, that he might fulfil the will of his father. III. The action of St Peter, who

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ight eter, who who smote with a sword one of the servants of the high prieft, shews the concern which that apostle had for his Master, but it proceeded likewise from a rash and inconsiderate zeal, and a spirit of revenge, on which account our Lord blamed him for it. This teaches us, that violence and revenge are difpleasing to Christ, and unworthy of his disciples; wherefore we ought to flun them, and always imitate the great meekness and patience of our Saviour, who being able to punish those that came to take him, and to defend himself against their attempts, would not do it, but even gave a proof of his goodness as well as of his power, by healing the person St Peter had wounded. IV. We find here that St Peter, who after he had expressed so great a zeal for his Master, for fear of death denied him three times. The fall of this apostle is a proof of our great weakness, and how easily we may be surprised by temptation, when we neglect the duties of watchfulness and prayer. However, this apostle recovered from his fall, while Judas fell into incurable despair. Sins which men fall into merely by furprife, are easier repented of than those which are committed obstinately and deliberately. Lastly, The relation of Christ's appearance before the council of the Jews, shews, that he was not condemned for any crime, and that he was wholly innocent, fince the fentence of his condemnation was only grounded upon what he himself had laid, that he was the Son of God. However, he owned the fame, and submitted to so unrighteous a judgment; whereby he has given us the most convincing proof imaginable of his love, and an example of zeal and patience, which we ought always to fet before our eyes.

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CHAP.

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# C H A P. XXII. 39-71

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# CHAP. XXIII.

CHRIST appears, and is accused before Pilate. and afterwards before Herod, and by both of them is declared innocent. II. Pilate endeavours to deliver him: But, being at length overcome by the importunity of the Jews, he condemns him to death.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. IX/E observe, at first fight, the injustice and malice of the Jews, who, after they had themselves condemned our Lord, fally accused him before Pilate, of attempting to raise a sedition among the people, and to make himself a king; and who, in spite of all that Pilate could say to pacify them, were fo defirous of his death, that they chose rather to fave the life of a murderer and a rebel, than his. II. We find by this history, that God permitted Pilate to fend Jesus to king Herod, that, by this means, his perfect innocence might more evidently appear, fince this prince also found nothing in him worthy of death. III. It is to be observed, that when our Saviour appeared before Herod, he did not fpeak to him, nor return him any answer, because the questions that prince put to him, did not proceed from any defign of being better informed by him, but from a vain curiofity, and defire of feeing fome miracle wrought by him. God manifelts himself to those who with sincerity seek after truth; but leaves those in their blindness, who inquire after truth only out of curiofity and in a spirit of pro- ness an faneness. IV. And above all, we ought to observe perfect the injustice of *Pilate*, who was convinced that Christ who us was wrongfully accused; desired to deliver him; others and

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and could have done it; but was afraid to do it; and, after some resistance, condemned him in complaisance to the Jews. This is the manner of unjust judges, and in general, of all those that sin against light, and who pay a greater regard to men, and to motives of policy, interest and ambition, than to what God, justice, and conscience, require of them. This example likewise shews, that it is to no purpose to have a few good thoughts, and a faint desire of doing our duty, and even to withstand temptation for a time, if we give way to it at last, but is rather an aggravation of one's fault: and therefore upon all occasions we are bound to follow the dictates of our conscience, without suffering any solicitations, or other reasons whatever, to withdraw us from our duty.

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# C H A P. XXIII. 26-56.

CT Luke relates, I. What happened when Jesus I was led forth to be crucified, and whilft he was upon the cross, and his death. II. The prodigies that then happened. III. His burial.

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Christ made at the time of his crucifixion, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do, ought to inspire us with the like noble sentiments. III. Another circumstance, and which is worthy of our attention, is what St Luke relates about the two thieves that were crucified with our Saviour. In one of them, we see a terrible instance of obduracy; which shews how far men may carry their impiety and wickedness: but in the other, who reproved his companion, and called upon Jesus as his Saviour and King, though he faw him nailed to the crofs, we may remark a wonderful faith, a hearty repentance, and a profound humility. In the promise our Lord made him: This day shalt thou be with me in paradise, we have an instance of God's mercy to penitent finners, which, however, must not be so abused, as to imagine that we may, without endangering our falvation, put off our conversion to the end of our lives. This promise does likewise assure us, that those who die in the favour of God, do enter into a state of happiness immediately after their death. IV. Christ's death and burial are to be confidered as the last degree of his humiliation, and the accomplishment of that facrifice which he offered to God for the atone-Thus we find therein the foundament of our fins. tion of our faith and confidence, and powerful motives not to fear death. Lastly, We are to consider, that the feveral prodigies which happened whilft our Lord was expiring upon the crofs, were defigned to shew that he was really the Son of God, which effect they actually produced upon the centurion who was appointed to guard the crofs, and all the people that were present, particularly those who were his friends and followers in this life. But this is what appeared yet more plainly afterwards, when he arole the third day from the dead.

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# CHAP. XXIV.

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AP.

I. CHRIST being risen from the dead, angels first tell the news to the women that went to his sepulchre. II. Afterwards he appeared to two of his disciples as they were going to Emmaus. III. And at last, to the apostles. IV. St Luke concludes his gospel, in relating the last orders which our Lord gave his apostles, and his ascension.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ST Luke informs us in this chapter, that Christ being risen, the women that went to his sepulchre, received the first news of his resurrection from the angels, and that afterwards he appeared to two difciples, and lastly to all the apostles; who were fully fatisfied of his refurrection, by conversing with him, by touching him, and feeing him eat in their prefence. Our Lord's appearing at several times to his disciples, proves that he is rifen, and ought powerfully to strengthen our faith and hope, which are built upon his refurrection. In the discourse which our Saviour had with the two disciples in the way to Emmaus, we may perceive, that though they preserved a tender remembrance of their Master, and had even some hopes of his rising again, they did not yet believe it, and that their faith was as yet very weak; which proves that they did not believe the refurrection without fufficient grounds, nor till they were fully convinced of it. On the other hand, we observe, that Christ instructed them in the mystery of his death and refurrection, by explaining the prophecies relating to them. This should induce us to read and meditate upon the prophets, fince we find their predictions so proper to confirm us in the faith, especially fince the event has perfectly cleared up M 3 and and verified them. In the last commands that Christ left with his disciples, we find an abstract of the doctrine of the gospel, which may be reduced to this: That Jesus Christ died, that he rose again, and that he fent his apostles to declare throughout the world the remission of fins, and to persuade men to repent. Laftly, The ascension of our Lord ought fully to convince us that he is the Son of God: and as the apostles, when they saw him ascend into heaven, worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem rejoicing and praifing God; we ought also to worship him as our God and Saviour, to obey him, and to rejoice continually, whilft we reflect on the glory to which he is exalted at the right hand of his father, and firmly hope to be one day received into his glory ourselves. Amen.

The End of the Gospel according to St LUKE.

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## ARGUMENT.

The Gospel according to St John was writ a long time after the other Gospels, about fixty years, it is thought, after the ascension of Christ. We meet in this Gospel, with several of our Lord's discourses and many remarkable particulars of his life, sufferings and resurrection, which are not related by the other three evangelists.

# CHAP. I.

HIS chapter has three parts. I. St John teaches us, that Jesus Christ is God; that he was made man, and came into the world to save mankind, and to make all those who believe in him the children of God. II. He relates the testimony which John the baptist bare of our Saviour, letting the Jews know the dignity of his person, and the nature of his office. III. Jesus makes himself known to Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael.

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REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

THE first part of this chapter instructs us in the infinite dignity of the person of Jesus Christ, and the end for which he came into the world. for his person, St John teaches us, that Jesus Christ, who is here called the Word, is God; and that this Word was made flesh, that is to fay, that Jesus was made man, and affumed our nature. Thus, one of the first and most important truths of Christianity, is to believe that Jesus Christ is both God and man, And the divinity of his person should convince us of the divinity of his doctrine, and make us acknowledge God's infinite love, in giving his own Son for our redemption. II. We see, that the end for which Christ came into the world, was, to be the light of the world, to enlighten mankind with the knowledge of God, and to purchase for them that should receive him, and believe in him, the right of becoming his children. We likewise learn, how great the excellence of the gospel is, and the obligation we lie under, of receiving with faith and thanksgiving, that wholfome doctrine preached by the only Son of God; and of shewing by our obedience, that we are his children by adoption. III. St John informs us, that John the baptist was sent from God to the Jews, to let them know who Christ was, and prepare them to receive him, not as a temporal, but as a spiritual King, and as a Saviour that should atone for the fins of mankind, and would pour upon them the gifts of God's holy spirit. It is for this reason, that John the baptist said, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the fin of the world. And, This is he which baptiseth with the boly Ghost. The pardon of fins, and the power of the holy Ghoft, which regenerates and fanctifies us, are therefore the two principal graces that Christ has acquired for us, and to which

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we are bound to aspire. IV. We ought likewise to observe the humility, zeal, and faithfulness which John the baptist exerted, by owning that he was not the Messiah, but only his forerunner, and by abasing himself so much below Jesus Christ. Thus we ought likewise to entertain humble sentiments of ourselves, never feek our own glory, but that of Christ alone; and to labour every one in his calling; and, to the utmost of his power, to make him known to men, and to bring them to him. V. We fee how Jesus Christ, as soon as ever he entered upon his ministry, made choice of his disciples; he did so, because he defigned to make use of them in preaching the gofpel throughout the world, and to the end they might bear witness to his life, his doctrine, his miracles, his death and refurrection. The great joy of these first apostles, at finding the Messiah, and their earneftness to follow him, teaches us, that our greatest happiness is to know Christ, and inviolably to adhere to him. Christ's commendation of Nathanael, saying, Behold an Ifraelite indeed, in whom is no guile, ought to be well observed. By that we see our Lord had a perfect knowledge of all things, and that the quality which he chiefly confiders, and which he expects in his disciples, is purity of heart, an upright intention, a great aversion to hypocrify, and a fincere love to truth and holinefs.

## CHAP. II.

I. CHRIST changes water into wine at the marriage in Cana. II. He goes to Jerusalem, and drives out of the temple those that profaned it. III. He works some miracles in that city at the feast of the passover.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE miracle that Christ wrought, by changing water into wine at the marriage of Cana, has this remarkable circumstance, that it was his first miracle, and that he began by that to manifest his divine power and calling, in presence of the blessed virgin his mother, of his disciples, and several other perfons, which caused his fame to be spread throughout Galilee, and his disciples to believe on him. the same reason, when he came to Jerusalem, he drove out of the temple those who bought and fold there. He did the same three years after, a little before his death. Christ acting thus in the temple, which he called his father's house, was pleased to give a proof, at the very beginning of his ministry, of his divine authority, and of his great zeal; which was taken notice of by the apostles, who applied to him these words: The zeal of thy house has eaten me up. What we are to learn from hence, is, to be filled with great zeal for the glory of God, to oppose every thing that is contrary to it, and to shew a respect for the places that are devoted to the service of God; and, in general, for all that belongs to religion. III. It is to be observed, that the Jews required of Christ some proofs of his authority: whereupon he told them; Destroy this temple, and I will build it again in three days. By which he meant, that the strongest proof he could give of his receiving his authority from God, was, that he would rile from the dead the third day; but he spoke in figurative and dark terms: it not being proper, as yet, to speak more plainly concerning his death and refurrection. The last thing St John relates here, is, that feveral people believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles he did. But that Jesus did not commit bimself unto them, because he knew all men: - And knew

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knew what was in man. We ought carefully to attend to this place, where it is faid, that Christ knows all men, and all that passes in their hearts; and, particularly, that he does not look upon all those who call themselves Christians, to be his true disciples. Thus we must not pretend to be acceptable to him, unless the profession we make of believing in him be sincere, nor unless we shew the truth of it by our obedience.

#### CHAP. III.

In this chapter St John relates, I. The discourse between Jesus Christ and Nicodemus; in which, under the figure of a second birth, and of water, he shews, that men must be wholly renewed, and inwardly fanctified by the holy Ghost, if they would become his disciples, and enter into the kingdom of heaven. II. Next he makes mention, after a figurative manner, of his death. He informs him of the design of his coming into the world, and shews what is the cause of the unbelief and perdition of men. III. John the baptist, informed by his disciples that a great number of people followed Christ, expresses great joy at it, and declares openly, that Christ was infinitely more excellent than he; that he was the Son of God, and that none but such as believed in him could be saved.

# REFLECTIONS.

LET us learn from the discourse that Christ had with Nicodemus, I. That carnal men cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and that, in order to be admitted there, we must become new creatures, and entertain thoughts and inclinations that will lead us to the knowledge of the truth, and to enquire after spiritual things. II. This may likewise teach us,

that fince it is by the spirit of God alone that we can be thus regenerated, we ought to implore fervently and continually the grace of that holy spirit, and make a right use of it when God shall grant it to us. III. Christ gives us here an abstract of the gospel, faying, That God fo loved the world, that be gave bis only begotten Son, to the end, that who soever believeth in him may not perish, but have everlasting life. These words, and those which follow, shew plainly, that the gift which God has made to mankind of his Son, is the greatest token he ever gave them of his love; that faith in Christ is the only means of being saved; and if there be any who do not believe, but reject the light of the gospel, it only proceeds from their being addicted to fin, and from a heart depraved and corrupted by their passions; but that those who have a love to virtue, never fail to approve of the doctrine of Christ. From whence we ought to confider, of how great importance it is to diveft ourfelves of our passions, and to purify our hearts with a fincere love of truth and virtue. We have heard the testimony that John the baptist gave of our Lord, by a pubic confession that Jesus was greater than he, and how great fatisfaction he conceived, when he was informed, that the glory of our Saviour began to spread itself. These are arguments of the profound humility and great zeal of that faithful forerunner of the Messiah; and thus we ought always to bear witness to the truth, and to feek not our own glory, but that of our Saviour, in fuch manner, that the advancement of his kingdom, and the falvation of men, may be the principal object of our wishes, and beget in us the greatest joy. We learn further, from this discourse of John the baptist, that Christ being the Son of God, and having received from his father a power without bounds, it is only by faith, and by a fincere obedience to his doctrine, that we

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can obtain falvation; and that those who disobey him, continue exposed to condemnation and death. This is what is expressed in the last verse of this chapter, by these words, which contain the substance of the christian doctrine: He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

#### CHAP. IV.

I. CHRIST going from Judea to Galilee, and passing through Samaria, discourses with a Samaritan woman, and makes himself known to her; upon which she believed on him, as several other Samaritans did asterwards. II. Arriving in Galilee, he heals the son of a nobleman of that country. For the better understanding this chapter, it must be observed, that the Samaritans were originally partly Jews, and partly Gentiles; that they worshipped the true God in a temple built upon mount Gerizim, but that they did not serve him in the temple of Jerusalem, nor in the manner which he had required; upon which account, there was great enmity between them and the Jews.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. THE first reflection that is to be made here, is, that Christ, meeting with a Samaritan woman near a well, in his wisdom and goodness made use of that occasion to instruct her, and to bring her to the knowledge of the truth, by speaking to her concerning himself and his doctrine, under the similitude of water. The manner in which our Lord mentioned to her this spiritual water, and the wholesome effects which it produces, is a lesson to us, that the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ is the most precious

precious gift that God ever gave to men, and what we ought to defire with the greatest fervency. Il. The second instruction is, that the grace of God, and his covenant, is no longer appropriated to one nation, or to one peculiar place, as was pretended both by the Jews and Samaritans; but that all men, without distinction, may be partakers of it. And, III. That the true worship which God requires of us, is, not only that which is visible and external, but that of the heart; and that as he is a spirit, they that worship bim, must worship bim in spirit and in truth. IV. We fee that the disciples of our Lord urging him to take fome food, received this answer from him: My meat is to do the will of him that fent me. And to shew them that they should be ready to labour, as he did, in the conversion of sinners, he uses the similitude of an approaching harvest. Let us gather from hence, that there is nothing which we ought to take greater pleasure and satisfaction in, than in doing the will of God, and instructing our neighbour; and that all of us ought thus to employ ourselves with our utmost zeal. V. The conversion of the Samaritan woman, and feveral of the inhabitants of the town of Sychar, is an event which shews, that the Messiah did not come for the sake of the Jews only; but that other nations likewise were to be admitted to the benefits of his coming into the world. This conversion, and the eagerness of the woman to inform the inhabitants of her town of what had happened, and to bring them to Christ, is a lesson also to us, that we should receive with readiness the golpel when it is preached to us; and, moreover, contribute all that in us lies, to bring over our neighbour to the faith, by our exhortations, and by our good examples. Laftly, St John informs us, that Christ being returned into Galilee, healed there the fon of a nobleman of Capernaum, by his word only, and

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### CHAP. V.

CHRIST cures a man that had been afflicted with the palfy thirty eight years. And as the Iews found fault with him for working this miracle on the fabbath-day, he represents how unreasonable they were to condemn him. The substance of what he faid on that occasion, is as follows: He acquaints the Jews, that he wrought his miracles by the power of God; that they ought not to be surprised at his attributing to himself so much authority, and calling God his father; that he would do greater miracles; and that he would raise the dead; that he would judge the world; that he would bestow eternal life upon fuch as believed in him; and condemn all those that should reject him. Christ adds, that he did not defire to be believed upon his bare word, that he was fent by God; that the Jews might fatisfy themselves by the testimony of John the baptist, which had great weight with them; by the miracles he wrought, and by the predictions of Moses and the prophets. Lastly, He complains of the unbelief of the Jews, who would not have recourse to him to obtain everlasting life; and tells them, that this unbelief proceeded from hearts void of the love of God, and full of felf-love, and of the glory of the world.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. WE discover, in the cure of the paralytic, whose history St John here gives us, the wonderful power of our Lord, who, by his word only,

only, entirely cured a man that had loft the use of his limbs for thirty eight years; which was as great a miracle as that which was done at the pool at Bethelda. We fee that the Lord had compassion on this paraly. tical man, asking him, whether he defired to be healed, and at the fame time actually healing him in an unexpected manner. Whence we may observe, that our gracious Redeemer is always disposed to communicate his favours to men, and to deliver them from their miseries; that he even prevents them, and offers his mercies to them; but that no body is admitted to partake of them, but those who desire them, and who, like the paralytical man, lay hold of these offers which Christ so graciously makes them. II. We should carefully attend to that which Christ said to this fick man: Behold, thou art made whole, fin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. This is a warning to those whom God has delivered from any infirmity, or any other misfortune, to avoid, for the time to come, falling into fin, for fear of obliging God to punish them more severely. The discourse in which Christ proves to the Jews, by several arguments, that he was fent from God, shews us, that our faith is built upon a folid foundation, upon convincing and incontestable proofs; to fortify ourselves therefore in the faith, we ought feriously to weigh the proofs contained in this chapter, and add to them those which the Jews had not at that time, and which are drawn from the refurrection of our Saviour; from the establishment of the Christian religion; and from the testimony of the apostles. Besides this general observation, we may make the three following particular ones upon this discourse of Christ. I. That God gave our Lord an unlimited power, which, as he exerted formerly in doing miracles, he will display yet more pompoutly when he shall come to raise the dead, and to judge all men, both the righteous

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righteous and the wicked. We ought therefore to revere this power of the Son of God, to obey him, and to honour him, as we honour the Father, that we may be raifed one day to life eternal, and not to condemnation. II. Since Christ alledges the testimony of the holy scriptures, and of Moses in particular, and exhorts the Jews to fearch and examine them, it follows, that we ought often to read, and carefully to meditate upon the writings of the Old Testament, as well as those of the New, fince this is the way to be confirmed in the faith, and to obtain everlafting life. III. What Christ said to the Jews about their unbelief, and the cause of it, is a lesson to us, that if there be any people that will not come to our Lord to obtain life, the reason is, that they have not the love of God in them, and that they are flaves to their passions. Above all, Christ declares that the love of the world, and the glory of it, and the defire to be approved and well efteemed of by men, is one of the greatest impediments to faith and falvation.

# C H A P. VI. 1-21.

I. CHRIST feeds five thousand persons with five loaves and two fishes. II. He walks upon the water to go to his disciples, and stills a tempest.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, was a miracle which the apostles did not expect, though they had been witnesses of so many other miracles. This miracle our Lord wrought as much to increase and strengthen their faith, and convince them of his almighty power, as to supply the necessities of the multitudes that followed him. This, therefore, is one of the most illustrious mira-Vol, III.

cles our Lord wrought, by reason of the great num. bers that were witnesses of it. St John observes, that those people were so affected with this miracle, that they not only affirmed that Christ was the prophet, and the Messiah whom the Jews expected, but they would likewise have declared him king; for which reason he withdrew to a solitary place, being unwilling that any fedition or commotion should be raised for his fake. This proceeding of the Jews, was an effect of the opinion they had taken up, that the Meffiah was to be a temporal king; but the retreat of Christ shewed that his kingdom was not an earthly one; which should teach us, not to feek our glory in this world; and, above all, to shun the pomp and splendor of the world, and to behave ourselves always with great humility. III. In the other miracle that our Saviour wrought in behalf of his apostles, and which must needs have made a deep impression on them, when he came to them walking upon the water, he gave a most convincing proof of his care and love for his disciples; suffering them to be exposed to a storm, that he might prove them, and afterwards deliver them in a manner more furprifing, and fuller of comfort, than if he had been with them at first. Such is the iffue of the trials and afflictions with which God vifits those he loves; fooner or later he comes to their affiftance; and the evil they are exposed to manifest his love to them, and increase their consolation and their joy.

# C H A P. VI. 22-71.

I. O UR Lord and Saviour having miraculous fed the people with five loaves and two fishes, and observing their eagerness in following him takes occasion from thence to exhort them to see for spiritual food, and such as would make them

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live for ever, rather than for bodily sustenance. II. He then tells them, that he was that food, the true bread from heaven, and that those who eat of that bread shall attain everlasting life. III. He adds, by way of explanation of what he had before said, that this food was his sless and his blood, which he would give for the life of the world: by which he hinted at the benefits of his own death; but he expressed himself siguratively, and somewhat obscurely, because he would not yet openly declare that he should be put to death. IV. Some of his disciples being offended at this discourse, Christ tells them, that these words were to be understood in a spiritual sense; but that did not hinder several among them from forsaking him.

# REFLECTIONS:

THE first and chief instruction this discourse of our Saviour furnishes us with, is, to labour much more earnestly to procure that food that causes men to live for ever, than that which only serves to support a temporal and fading life. Our Lord has told us plainly, that he himself is this heavenly bread, and that this food of the foul is only to be found in him, and in his gospel; and that the will of his father who had fent him was, that all that believe in him should have eternal life, and that he should raise them up at the last day. What our Lord faid upon this occasion was obscure to those that heard him. The Jews could not conceive how Christ was that bread that descended from heaven; and how it was necessary to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, in order to obtain everlafting life; but to us Christians this ought to be very clear, foralmuch as we know that the death of Jesus Christ is the true food of the foul, and the only principle of spiritual life and immortality. He tells us himself, N 2 that

that his words are spirit and life; that is to fay, they are to be understood after a spiritual manner; and, that to eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, means nothing else, but to come to him, and to be. lieve in him. Only it is necessary that this faith should be sincere, and attended with love, trust, and obedience, and that it should unite us so closely to Chrift, that nothing should be able to separate us from him. The question which our Lord put to his apostles, whether they would likewise forsake him, as divers of his disciples had done; and St Peter's reply, Lord, to whom should we go? oblige us to confider, that Christ forces none into his service; that the obedience he requires, is free and voluntary; that, however, we ought never to leave him, find he only has the words of eternal life; and that, being the Son of the living God, he is the fole author of falvation. The last words of this chapter, where it is faid, that Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas, who was of the number of the twelve apostles, would betray him; teach us, that our Lord knows all those that call themselves his disciples, and that he differns them who do not believe in him, from fuch as are faithful to him. An external profession of Christianity is not sufficient, and there is nothing but a true faith, and steady obedience, that can assure our heart before God, and make us accepted by him, who fees the hearts of all men, and who will render to them all according to their works.

# C H A P. VII. 1-30.

I. S T John relates here a journey that Christ their ed in a state of tabernacles says of the state of tabernacles says of

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#### REFLECT

I. THE first thing to be observed in this chapter is, that our Lord refused to go publicly to Jerusalem, and in the company of his relations: he acted thus out of prudence, that he might avoid all pomp, and that he might not be exposed to the rage of the Jews, who fought to put him to death: That which he faid to some of his relations, that the world, that is to say, the unbelieving fews, could not bate them, but bated bim, because be testified of it, that the works thereof were evil; contains a certain truth, namely, that worldly people love those that are like them, but hate those whose lives and discourses condemn their wicked actions. fee here the various judgments the people passed upon Chrift; but, above all, we may observe the blindness and malice of the Jews, who, without minding the proofs which our Lord, by his miracles, gave of his divine mission, and without being moved with his mild, and, at the fame time, ftrong arguments, in vindication of what he had done, and to prove that his doctrine was from heaven, accused him of breaking the law of God, and of being possessed of a devil; and would even have put him to death. This proceedure of the Jews, who thus refifted and hardened themselves against the truth, shews, that prejudice and passion may blind men to such a degree, that nothing can undeceive them; and, that they are even offended at those things which tend most to Christ their edification and confirmation. What our Saviour nacles says on this occasion, deserves our particular attendium tion: If any man will do the will of my father, he found hall know of the dostrine, whether it he of God, or al per whether I speak of myself. Let us gather from hence N 3 this

this important lesson, that the principal disposition we ought to be in, in order to know the doctrine of Jefus Chrift, and to discover the truth and beauty of it, is to have an upright heart, and a fincere defire to do the will of God, as far as it is and can be known to us; but, those who are not thus disposed. can never come to the knowledge of the truth. Laft. ly, It likewise appears from this history, that though the Jews had formed a design of putting Jesus to death, they could do him no harm, nor durst any man lay hands on him. The wicked can hurt good men, only when, and as God is pleased to permit; and, whatever men may enterprize, the counsel of the Lord that shall stand.

# C H A P. VII. 31-53

HE Pharifees being enraged because the people were affected at the discourses and miracles of our Lord, fent some persons to seize on him; but, he continued to speak with so much authority and evidence, and exhorted the people fo pathetically, that feveral acknowledged him to be a prophet; and that some even believed he was the Messiah; so that those who were ordered to lay hold of him, returned, without daring to do it; at which the Pharifees were extremely irritated.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE first thing we have here to observe, is that the discourses and miracles of Christ produced very different effects, forasmuch as the people were extremely affected with them, and filled with admiration; whereas, on the contrary, the Pharifees were fo provoked by them, that they would have caused our Lord to be apprehended. Thus we may see how differently the word of God is received; fome

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fome open their eyes and their hearts to the truth, and grow better by it; others reject it, and proceed even to hate those who propose it, and to be exasperated against them. II. We may take notice, in the discourses of our Saviour, with what evidence, meekness, and authority, he continues to apply himself to the Jews; and, especially, admire those kind invitations which he makes them, faying, If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Whereby he offers them his grace, and the gifts of the holy Spirit, which he was ready to pour upon them that should believe in him. He likewise makes us the same offers in the gospel. It is our business to receive them as we ought, and to embrace them with zeal and gratitude. III. We ought to reflect upon what St John fays, that those who were commanded to feize our Saviour, durst not do it, but told them who fent them, that never man spake like this man. By which we fee, on one hand, the virtue and efficacy of the word of God; and, on the other, that God renders the defigns of the wicked vain and ufeless whenever he pleases. Finally, it is very remarkable, that the Pharisees, instead of discovering that in oppoling Christ they opposed God himself; and, inflead of being moved at feeing fo many people bearing witness to our Lord, were more and more enraged against him, and even against the people who spoke favourably of him and his doctrine. This is a proof, that the most learned, and most distinguished in the eye of the world, are often less disposed than the mean and fimple to receive the gospel; because they are flaves to their passions, and, especially, because they are filled with pride, and a good opinion of themselves, and do not endeavour fincerely, and in the integrity of their hearts, to be instructed, and to know the truth.

CHAP.

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# C H A P. VIII. 1-29.

ST John relates here, I. The history of the wo. man taken in adultery. II. A discourse that Christ had with the Jews, in which he told them he was the light of the world, and that they ought to believe what he told them of himself. III. He reproaches them for their blindness and unbelief, and speaks about his departure out of this world, and his death; but does it in figurative terms, and such as they could not comprehend.

### REFLECTIONS.

TO understand the history of the adulterous woman, and to make a right use of it, we must observe, I. That the design of the Pharisees in bringing this woman to Christ, was to ensnare him; for, if he had faid that she ought not to be put to death, they would have charged him with breaking the law of God; and, if he had passed sentence of condemnation on her, they would have accused him to the governor, for violating the rights of the fupreme magistrate. II. If Christ did not condemn that woman, it was not because her crime was not great, and worthy of death, but for prudential reafons, and to flew that he fought nothing but the falvation of finners. III. It is particularly to be obferved, that our Lord faid to that woman, Go thy way, and fin no more; which shews, that he gave, on this occasion, a proof of his mercy towards sinners, but that he was far from excusing her crime; which may also teach us, that God does not pardon finners, but upon condition that they will not relapse into their fins. In our Saviour's discourse with the Jews, we may confider, I. These remarkable expressions of our Lord: I am the light of the world;

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be that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but hall have the light of life. These words ought to be continually meditated upon by Christians, and should ftrongly engage them to make a right use of that light which lighteth them, ever following Christ, and walking in the way which he has marked out for us by his doctrine, and by his example, and which will certainly lead to to life and immortality. II. As the Pharifees reproached our Lord with fpeaking too highly of himself, he said several things to cure them of their prejudices against him, and to engage them to believe that he spake to them from What the Saviour of the world faid upon that occasion, should have greater weight with us, in convincing us that he is the Son of God, and that his doctrine proceeds from heaven; God having given authentic testimony thereof, not only by the miracles which our Saviour wrought, but likewife by what followed his death, his refurrection, and his exaltation to heavenly glory. Laftly, We have feen that the Pharifees did not improve by the instructions of our Lord, though he spake to them with so much meekness, and what he said was attended with so much evidence, yet that they continued still in their unbelief, and that Christ therefore told them, that they should die in their fins. Thus men, who are enslaved to the world, and to their passions, resist the evidence and force of truth when it is proposed to them; and, by refusing to believe in Jesus, and to obey him, they remain in their fins, and confequently in condemnaion and in death.

# C H A P. VIII. 30-59.

HRIST exhorts those among the Jews, who had believed in him, to presevere in his doctrine, and promises them true liberty. II. He tells

the unbelieving Jews, who gloried in being free, and the children of Abraham, that they were not his children, fince they did not imitate him in his faith; and reproaches them for their unbelief; at which they were so provoked, as to say very harsh things to him, and to attempt to stone him; but, he escaped their rage, and retreated from them.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IN this discourse our Saviour teaches us, I. That when we have the happiness of knowing him, and believing in him, we ought constantly to persevere in the truth, and adhere to it more and more; which, if we do, we shall be really his disciples, and enjoy that true liberty of the children of God, which confifts, as our Lord has faid, in being delivered from the bondage of fin. II. What he told the Jews, that they were not the children of God, nor of Abraham, fince they did not imitate the faith of that patriarch, but that they were rather the children of the devil, fince they did his works, has great weight in it. may learn from thence, that the furest token whereby to discover the children of God, is, that they do his will, and that they love those whom God loves; but those that set themselves against the truth, and against such as declare it, are the children and imitators of the devil, who is a liar, a murderer, and an enemy of the truth. III. We likewise see in this discourse of our Lord, how happy those are who receive his doctrine, and fubmit thereto, fince he declares that they are not under the power of death. IV. We may observe next, that though Christ spoke to the Jews with so much plainness and strength of argument, they, instead of benefiting by his instructions, were exasperated by them, and proceeded to fuch a degree of rage, as to call him a Samaritan, and a man possessed by the devil. This is an instance

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of the most deplorable blindness, and the blackest malice, and shews us how dangerous it is to abandon ourselves to our passions, and to fall into unbelief. Lastly, We have in this chapter a remarkable proof of the glory and divinity of Christ, by his declaring that he was before Abraham. The infinite dignity of his person ought to convince us so much the more of the divinity of the gospel, and our obligation to obey him, as he is our God and our Saviour.

### CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter contains the history of a man that was born blind, who received his fight.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE history contained in this chapter is very remarkable: besides the goodness and power of Christ, which evidently appear in his giving fight to the man that was born blind, as well as in all his other miracles, we fee here three things well worthy our attention. I. The proceeding of the Pharifees, and the pains they took to deny this miracle: What they faid for that purpole to the father and mother of the blind man, and afterwards to the blind man himself, to know whether he had been blind, and how he received his fight. The Pharifees, by all this enquiry, did not defire to find out the truth, but rather to stifle and oppose it; and, when they could not avoid feeing it, they rejected it, and flandered Jesus, the author of it; and at last, when they could fay nothing against the certainty of the miracle, and were unable to answer the arguments of the man, they broke out into injurious language against him, and excommunicated him. In all this their proceedure ceedure we may discover marks of the most violent passion, and of the most obstinate malice. Thus do the wicked shut their eyes against the truth, and are more and more hardened, even by those things which should affect and convert them; however, all the endeavours of the Pharifees to discredit the miracle. tended very remarkably to make it known, and prove the certainty of it. II. We may observe, in the discourse of the blind man, the ingenuity with which he spoke to the Pharisees, and confounded them, maintaining, that he had been well cured; and, fince Christ had restored his fight to him, he could not be a wicked man and a deceiver, as they pretended. In reading this relation, we fee the power of truth, and that the most simple persons do often judge better of things, than those who are thought to have more fense and knowledge; and, that God makes use of such people, to confound the wife men of this world. III. We fee that Christ, knowing that this man had been excommunicated by the Pharifees for speaking the truth in their presence, made himself known to him, telling him, that he was the Son of God, and affuring him, that those who passed for the most learned, such as the Pharisees, should continue in their blindness, whilst such as were looked upon as ignorant, but who were humble and fincere, should benefit by his doctrine. Our Lord, we see, graciously receives those that love the truth, and that are perfecuted by the world, and grants them new gifts and new graces, whilft those who are conceited of themselves, and obstinately reject the truth when it is offered to them, remain in their unbelief, and perish in their blindness.

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WHAT is here related happened at two different times: The first part of the chapter contains a discourse which our Lord had with the Jews. after he had cured the man that was born blind, in which he compares himself to a good shepherd. He speaks likewise of false shepherds, and of hirelings, by which characters he describes deceivers, and particularly the Pharisees. He says, that such people had nothing else in view but their own interest, and only fought to gratify their own pride and covetoufness; whereas, he came into the world to procure the good and welfare of his sheep, and that he was willing even to lay down his life for them. Some months after, Jesus being at Jerusalem, at the feast of the dedication of the temple, and the Jews enquiring of him, whether he were the Messiah, he tells them, that his miracles shewed sufficiently who he was; that if they did not know him, it proceeded from the hardness of their hearts, but that his own sheep knew him; that he would give unto them everlasting life; and, that God would never fuffer them to perish, fince he and his father were one. The Jews, upon this, were going to stone him, because he took upon him the title of the Son of God; but our Lord, not being willing to fpeak openly to them concerning his divinity, contented himself with telling them, that fince the scripture calls princes and magistrates Gods, he might very well affume the name of the Son of God without blasphemy, forasmuch as God had sent him into the world, and that his miracles plainly proved that he was fo. After which our Saviour retired from Jerusalem.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS discourse of Christ, speaking of himself under the character of a shepherd, is much plainer to us than it was to the Jews, fince we know perfectly that our Lord is the true shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep, that is to fay, for all true believers; and, that he came to gather them all together, from Jews and Gentiles, into his church Upon which we must acknowledge the infinite love of Christ, our good shepherd, who so tenderly loved his sheep, and who suffered death, to obtain life and falvation for them; and how great our happiness is, to be of the number of those sheep which he has redeemed by his blood, and for which he has purchased everlasting life. The second part of this chapter suggests to us four considerations. I. The first relates to the strange blindness and malice of the Jews, who, after fo many miracles which Christ had wrought, and so many proofs that shewed he was sent from God, asked him whether he was the Messiah, and then would have stoned him for a blasphemer. Our Lord himself observes, that this unbelief of the Jews proceeded from their not loving the truth, and from their want of a fincere defire to know it. If therefore men do not profit by the doctrine of Christ Jesus, and in the midst of light are still in ignorance and error, it proceeds from the want of docility, and love of truth and virtue. II. The fecond observation is, that the token and character of our Saviour's sheep, that is to fay, of his true disciples, is to hearken to the voice of their divine shepherd, to follow him, and to obey him. III. We see in this discourse of our Lord, that the happiness and salvation of true believers is certain, fince he declares, That he knows them, that he gives unto them eternal life, that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of the pect for the state of the s

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the Lord Jesus with great comfort, and a firm expectation of that glory and felicity which is prepared for them in his kingdom. IV. Since our Lord says, at the end of this chapter, that he could justly take upon himself the title of the Son of God, this should fully convince us of his divinity, and the excellence of his office, especially as we are elsewhere assured that he is both God and man; which is the strongest motive to believe in him, and to pay him that obedience which is so justly due to him, on account of that authority he has over us, and his love towards us.

### CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter contains the history of the resur-

### REFLECTIONS.

THE following are the principal reflections to be made upon this hiftory, which is one of the most remarkable of the whole gospel. I. That though our Lord had a great kindness for Lazarus, yet he did not go to Bethany till after he was dead, to the end, that the miracle of restoring him to life, might be much more illustrious than that of curing his diftemper. Those whom God loves may be exposed to many evils; he even delays to come to their affiftance, but he uses them thus, that his power and love may appear more plainly in their deliverance. II. We may observe, in what the sisters of Lazarus faid to our Saviour, their piety, love, and adherence to Christ, and the gereat opinion they had of his power. We fee, in particular, that they were fully perfuaded their brother would rife at the last We have yet much grater reason than those two holy women to love our Lord, to put our whole trust

trust in him, to expect all things from his power, and, particularly, to believe that the dead shall rife again at the end of the world. III. The kindness with which Christ spake to the sisters of Lazarus, to comfort them, and to prepare them for the miracle which he defigned to do; the concern he shewed, and the tears he shed when he faw Lazarus in the tomb. are very plain proofs, how much he loved these two women and their brother, and how charitable he was. and full of compassion. As far as we are affected with the misfortunes of other men, and ready to comfort the miserable, we may be said to have the spirit of Christ. But what is chiefly to be observed here, is, that our Lord restored life to Lazarus, after he had been four days in the grave. This great miracle, which Christ wrought but a few days before his death, and in the presence of a great number of the Jews, feveral of whom believed in him, is one of the most illustrious proofs that he gave, during his whole life, that he was the Son of God. This miracle ferves especially to confirm the doctrine of the refurrection of the dead, and the truth of what our Lord fays in this chapter: I am the refurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though be were dead, yet shall be live. IV. St John acquaints us, that the Pharifees, instead of being convinced by fo illustrious a miracle, were fo enraged to fee the people declare for Christ, that they formed a defign of putting him to death, which made him retire to a folitary place till the feast of the passover. Thus the enemies of our Lord grew more and more obstinate, refisted to the very last the evidence of his miracles; and, every thing our merciful redeemer did to foften and prevail upon them, only ferved to provoke them more against him. God permitted, however, the Jews to take the resolution of putting him to death, to the end that, contrary to their defign,

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fign our Lord might die, not only for the Jewish nation, but also to collect into one body all the children of God, and by that means establish his doctrine and kingdom in the world.

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# C H A P. XII. 1-19.

I. MARY anoints our Saviour's feet. II. Several people come to Bethany to fee Christ, and Lazarus that was raised. III. Our Lord makes his royal entry into Jerusalem.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three things to be confidered in the anointing of our Saviour's feet; the action itfelf; what judgment Judas passed upon this action; and what was faid by our Lord in defence of it. Mary anointed him with precious ointment, after the manner of those times, to testify her respect and love for him, we ought likewise to shew him our love and our zeal by all the means that are in our power, and which are most pleasing in his fight. The murmuring of Judas, who, being a thief, and a covetous man, complained that the price of that ointment was not given to the poor, proves very clearly, that the heart of this false disciple was entirely corrupted. We likewise see by this instance, what power covetoulnels has over those whom it possesses, and how wicked men do fometimes hide their paffions under the veil of religion and piety. And what Christ said in behalf of Mary, shews, that he vouchsafes to accept whatever is done for his honour, and particularly all acts of charity. II. The refort of many people to Belbany to see Lazarus, whom our Lord had raised, and the resolution taken by the priests to put Lazarus to death as well as Christ, is an argument of the truth of this miracle. It likewise shews, that VOL. III. the the wickedness of the chief among the Jews was at the highest pitch, and that there was no more good to be expected from them. And, III. The acclamations of the people who attended him when he made his entry into Jerusalem, is another proof of the refurrection of Lazarus; fince St John takes notice that the multitude bore witness that Christ had called Lazarus from the grave, and restored him to life. Our Lord was pleased, at that time, to receive the homage which he had before refused, and suffered himself to be publickly acknowledged for the Mes-He appeared, however, on this occasion, in great fimplicity, his attendants being none but the common people, and he himself sitting on an ass, as the prophet Zachariah had foretold. All this was done, that none of the marks which the prophets had given of the Messiah might be wanting in him; and to shew that humility and meekness were his character, and that the kingdom he was going to establish was a spiritual and heavenly kingdom. Now, if the disciples of Jesus Christ, and the multitude, expressed their joy and gratitude by attending him into Jerusalem, we are still more engaged to adore our great redeemer, and blefs God continually for the wonders he has done, and the many proofs he has given us of his power and his love.

# C H A P. XII. 20-50.

ST John relates four things: I. What Christ said when certain strangers, that were come to Jeru-Jalem to keep the feast of the passover, desired to see him. II. That God caused a voice at that time to be heard from heaven, and that upon the same occasion our Lord discoursed concerning his death, and the establishment of his kingdom, but that the Jews did not understand his words. III. St John observes,

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ferves, that though our Lord had wrought so many miracles, the Jews did not believe in him, and that this their unbelief had been foretold by the prophet Isaiab. IV. And lastly, the evangelist relates some exhortations which Christ made to the Jews before his death; in which he shews what would happen to those that should receive his doctrine, and to those that should reject it.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE meaning of what our Saviour faid, when the strangers defired to see him, was, that he would quickly manifest himself to all men; but, that he was to die first, as wheat must be put into the ground and die, before it can bring forth fruit. Our Lord adds, that it should be with his disciples as with himself; that all those who had a mind to follow him ought to prepare themselves for sufferings and death; but, that he would exalt those that should believe in him and ferve him, to the fame glory to which he was going to be exalted. The Jews did not comprehend this discourse; but it is by no means obscure to us. II. At that time Jesus, under the terrors of his approaching death, prayed unto his Father, that he would manifest his glory in a wonderful manner, and shew that he was his Son. which God caused a voice to be heard from heaven, declaring that what he had prayed for should be accomplished. This voice from heaven was heard when our Saviour was going to be crucified, to take away the scandal of the cross, and to convince them that he was really the Son of God. Whereupon our Lord declared, that the kingdom of Satan was going to be deftroyed, and he should soon draw all men to him, and that this would be one of the effects of his death. The event foon verified the divinity of this prediction. III. St John reflecting, in this chapter, ter upon the unbelief of the Jews, observes, that the greatest part did not believe in Christ, and others durst not own that they took him for the Messiah, because they were afraid of the Pharisees, and because they loved the praise of men more than that of God. Thus it is when the gospel is preached to men; some harden themselves, and reject it; and others, who are in fome manner affected with its excellency, dare not make an open profession of truth and holiness, being withholden by fear, by an unfeafonable shame, or by other passions. IV. We ought carefully to attend to what Christ said to the Jews towards the end of his life, when they were going to be deprived of his prefence; namely, that he was come to enlighten them, and to lead them to life; that they should have walked in the light, before the darkness overtook them; and, that those who would not hear his word, should be judged by that same word which they rejected. This declaration is made to all who have the gospel made known to them; and warns us to make a better use than the Jews did of this divine light, which enlightens us, left the darkness overtake us too; and left the gospel, which is preached to us, become one day the cause of our condemnation.

### CHAP. XIII.

I. CHRIST washes his apostles feet, and exhorts them to humility and charity. II. He declares that Judas would deliver him to the Jews, and discourses with his disciples about his decease. III. He exhorts them to love one another. IV. He foretels that Peter would deny him.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WHEN the Son of God washed the feet of his apostles, a little before his death, the design

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of that action, fo extraordinary and fo furprizing, was to flew how much he loved them, to give them an example of humility, and to teach them, that they ought to love one another, to consider all men as their equals, and to banish from their minds all thoughts of a temporal kingdom and worldly glory. We ought feriously to meditate upon this instance of humility and charity, which is of fo great efficacy to render us truly humble, and to excite us to love one another fincerely. If Jesus Christ who is our Master and Lord, has so humbled himself as to wash his disciples feet, which was the business of servants and flaves, there is no office we ought to think too mean, when charity and the good of our neighbour is concerned. This is the use we ought to make of this action, as our Lord exhorts us in these words: I bave given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you; if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. II. Our Lord thought fit to declare, in the presence of his apostles, that one of them would deliver him to the Jews, that when Judas should betray him, they might be convinced that it was to happen so, for the accomplishment of the designs of providence. Howbeit, Christ did not name Judas, nor discover him to all the apostles, because they should not attempt to hinder the execution of his defign. From thence it appears plainly, that our Saviour was not ignorant of any thing that was to befal him; that he knew the purposes of men, and the most fecret thoughts of their hearts. He foresees the treachery of Judas, but is not the author of it; it was the covetousness of that infidel disciple, which hurried him on to fo foul a deed; and he proceeds to put in execution what he had refolved, though Jesus had forewarned him that he knew his defign. Thus God foresees the fins which men are going to commit, without being the cause of them; he warns them of

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their fin and danger, but when they are obstinate, he leaves them to themselves. III. It is next to be ob. ferved, that Christ being shortly to leave his disciples, recommended to them, above all things, to love one another, which is the great commandment that our bleffed redeemer has left, and of which he has given us an example, by dying for us; and has most exprefly declared, that this should be the token by which his true disciples would be distinguished. Our principal duty therefore is, heartily to love each other, and to live in peace and concord, without which we have no right to bear the glorious name of Christians, IV. Christ's foretelling that Peter would deny him, is a fresh proof that nothing is hid from our Lord, and that he knows us better than we know ourselves. St Peter did not think himself capable of so great unbelief, and yet he fell that very night. Such an example should teach us all to distrust ourselves, and to be continually upon our guard, humbly acknowledging our weaknefs.

# CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter and the two following contain the discourse that Christ had with his disciples the evening before his death. His design in this discourse, was to comfort them, to strengthen their faith, and to fill them with courage and zeal, to the end, they might not be offended at his death; and, that afterwards they might be in a condition to preach the gospel, without fearing the hatred of the world.

In this fourteenth chapter, I. Christ makes mention to the apostles of the glory to which he was going to be exalted, and to which he would exalt them one day. II. He tells them, that they ought to be convinced by his miracles that God had sent him, and that they themselves should do as great miracles

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as his. And, III. He exhorts them to keep his commandments; he promises to send them the holy Ghost, assures them they should see him quickly again, and talks to them of the happiness of those that shall persevere in his love, and observe his word. IV. He gives them his blessing and his peace, and exhorts them to rejoice at his departure. This discourse being finished, he leaves Jerusalem, and goes with his apostles towards the mount of Olives.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IN this and the following chapters, we observe in general the great love Christ had for his disciples, and which he bears to all those that love him and believe in him. The duties which this discourse of our Lord engages us to, are, I. To meditate continually upon the glory to which he is exalted in the heavens, and to the enjoyment of which he declares he will likewise receive us; to aspire to the same glory. by following the way that leads to it; and, fince he himself is that way that leadeth to life, to adhere inviolably to him. II. The fecond duty, which is indeed the fum of religion, is, ardently to love our Saviour, and to show the fincerity of our love by keeping his commandments. III. The promise which Christ made of sending his Spirit, after his ascension, did not respect the apostles alone, who by the gift of the holy Ghoft were to have a power of working miracles conferred on them, but had some respect to all the faithful, into whose hearts he does fend his spirit of comfort and sanctification. It is our duty, therefore, to implore the guidance and affiftance of the holy Ghost, remembring what Christ said, that the world cannot know nor receive that holy Spirit; and that therefore, if we defire to obtain it, we must purity our hearts from the love of the world. IV. We should consider, that as our Lord promised his dif-0 4

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ciples to return to them after his resurrection, so he will come to us at the last day; that then his elect shall be filled with comfort and joy; and that, in expectation of his glorious coming, our chief care ought to be to persevere in his love, and to obey his divine commandments. The last part of this chapter teaches us, that Christ communicates and unites himself in the most intimate manner to all those that love him and keep his word; that he heaps his favours upon them, and grants them his blessing and his peace. A due restection upon all these precious advantages, ought to instance us with love for our gracious redeemer, and convince us that all our happiness consists in being faithful to him, in loving him, and living in communion with him.

### CHAP. XV.

UR Lord does four things in this chapter. I. He represents by the comparison of the vine and the branches, the union between him and his disciples. II. He exhorts them to persevere in this union, and in his love, to keep his commandments, and particularly, to love one another. III. He tells them, he had chosen them to preach the gospel throughout all the earth with wonderful success. IV. He warns them, that they should be exposed to persecution and the hatred of the world; but, for their encouragement, he represents to them, that he had been exposed to the same hatred, and promises them the assistance of the holy Ghost, which he would send after he left them.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE following reflections may be made upon the four parts of this chapter. I. The first, which contains the similitude of the vine and the branches,

branches, denotes the strictness of the union between Christ and the faithful, that all our happiness depends upon this union, that we must partake of the foirit and life of Christ, before we can bring forth fruit to the glory of God, and answerable to the advantage of being his disciples; and that such as are not united to him by faith, and that bear no fruit, shall be cut off and cast into the fire like withered branches. II. The fecond part teaches us, that our great and principal duty is to continue in the love of Christ, to keep his commandments, and to love each other; continually fetting before us, for this purpose, the example of his great love to us, which engaged him to lay down his life for us. III. Chrift's telling his apostles, that he had chosen them to establish his kingdom throughout the world, is a very clear proof of the divinity of the gospel, fince the preaching of the apostles was attended with the conversion of so many nations; but we ought likewise to confider, that our Lord has chosen and called us all, that we may bring forth fruit unto holiness, and that each of us may labour with all his might to promote his kingdom and the knowledge of him. IV. The last part of this chapter instructs us in two things: The one is, that the world usually hates those that love Christ, and that lead a godly life; but we must not think that strange, since our Lord himself has likewise been exposed to the same hatred. The other, that fince Christ has spoken, and the gospel has been preached to men, those who continue in infidelity and in corruption are without excuse, because they reject the testimony of the Son of God, of the holy Spirit, and of the apostles, and wilfully shut their eyes against the truth.

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# CHAP. XVI.

I. CHRIST continues to warn the apostles, that they ought to prepare themselves to be persecuted, and even to suffer death. II. To alleviate their sorrow at his departure, he promises them the holy Ghost; and tells them, that that holy Spirit would condemn the unbelieving world, and enable them more persectly to know the truths which he had taught them, and to declare them to mankind. III. He adds, that he was to leave them for a little time, but that they would soon see him again, when he should rise from the dead; that then they would be filled with joy; that he would bestow on them new favours, and procure for them the most precious gifts. IV. This discourse of Christ served to comfort the apostles, and to strengthen their faith.

## REFLECTIONS.

ET us learn from this chapter, I. That as the apostles were to be exposed to great persecutions, fo likewise true believers must expect to feel the effects of the hatred of those who neither know nor love II. That it was necessary for our the Lord Jesus. happiness that Christ should leave the world, that he might enter into his glory, and fend us the holy Ghoft, and establish his kingdom. III. What Christ fays of the holy Spirit, that when he is come, he will reprove the world of fin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; fignifies, that the coming of the holy Ghost, and the preaching of the apostles, would serve to convict the Jews of their wilful and inexcusable unbelief; to prove that Jesus was the Son of God; and to deftroy the kingdom of the devil. This is what actually happened; whereby we plainly fee, that the doctrine of our Lord proceeds from God. IV. The excellent

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excellent promifes which Christ made the apostles, of filling them abundantly with the gifts of the holy Ghoft, have likewise been accomplished, and the effects thereof appeared in the wonderful fuccess of their preaching. V. We may observe, that the apoftles did not understand what our Saviour meant, when he told them, that in a little while they should not see him; and again, in a little while they should fee him; and that he was going to his father, and that then they should be entirely comforted: but these words. as well as the foregoing, were perfectly explained by his refurrection, by his afcension, and by their glorious consequences. These promises, which confirmed the faith of the apostles, ought also to strengthen ours, and induce us to believe, that although Jefus Christ be at present absent from us, he will not be so always; that, if we persevere in his love. he will procure for us from God the most valuable favours; and that, as he returned to his apostles after his refurrection, he will likewife return to us at his fecond and last coming, to bring us into the glory of his kingdom.

# CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter contains the prayer which Christ offered to God his father before he suffered death, which consists of three articles: I. He prays for himself, and desires to be received into heavenly glory, that God may be gloristed thereby. II. He prays for the apostles, whom he was going to leave; and begs of his father to protect them, and to sanctify them, to the end that they may persevere in the saith, and be enabled to preach the gospel throughout the world, without fearing persecutions. III. He prays for all those that should believe in him, and that should receive the preaching of the apostles; and

he defires of God, that the apostles, and all the faith. ful, may be always united to him and to one another, by faith, and by charity; and that they might also be admitted to that glory into which he was to enter, and remain for ever with him.

#### REFLECTIONS.

IN the former part of this excellent prayer, which our Lord made when he was just going to offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross, there are two things to be confidered: First, That the Christian religion confifts in knowing the one only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has fent; that this is the only way to obtain eternal life; and therefore, that faith in God and Christ is absolutely necessary to falvation. We observe further, our Lord's great zeal for the glory of God, and the glorious reward he expected after his fufferings. By this example of our Saviour, we should learn to be animated with the fame zeal, and to glorify God upon earth as much as we are able, that we may be admitted into that glory, which he has prepared for his elect before the foundation of the world. II. We fee, in this prayer, the great love that Christ bore to his disciples, and with how much warmth and tenderness he recommended them to the protection of God his father before he left them. The event made appear, that the prayers of our Lord were heard, fince, except Judas, whose infidelity he had foretold, all the apostles persevered in the truth which they had embraced, and the zeal they exerted had so wonderful fuccess in the conversion of men. III. But what we ought above all to observe here, and what chiefy concerns us, is, that our Lord did not only pray for the apostles, but for all such as should believe in him, and that should receive their preaching. Hence we fee, how dear the faithful are to Christ, the care he

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takes of them, and the defire he has to render them partakers of that glory which he now enjoys. This ought to fill all those who truly love the Lord Jesus, with firm confidence and unspeakable joy. But it must be carefully observed, that Christ only prays thus for true believers; and that he himself declared, that he did not pray for the men of this world, for unbelievers. If, therefore, we desire to be of the number of those for whom Christ makes this prayer, and for whom he interceeds in heaven, we must separate ourselves from the world, we must be joined to Christ by a true faith, and to our neighbours by a sincere love, and persevere in the communion of God our Father, and of Jesus Christ our Saviour, to the end of our lives.

#### CHAP. XVIII.

I. CHRIST is taken in the garden. II. He is afterwards carried before the council of the Jews. III. And next before *Pilate*, who refused at first to condemn him. IV. We find here likewise St *Peter*'s denial.

# REFLECTIONS.

In this chapter there are four principal things to be considered: I. That our Lord caused those that came to apprehend him to fall down to the earth by one word only. St John takes notice, that Christ gave this mark of his power, to secure his apostles from being hurt by those who came to seize him; and, to shew them that he could, if he had pleased, escape death. II. The second reslection relates to the behaviour of St Peter, who drew his sword in the defence of his master, and a little while after denied him. This action shews that this apostle had zeal, but his zeal was not according to know-ledge

ledge, nor without great mixture of weakness. This action furnishes us with two instructions; one is, that if Christ blamed what this apostle did, upon an occafion that seemed lawful, it being to resist those that would unjustly have taken away his master's life; all actions of violence and revenge are unlawful, and there is nothing that can authorize them; and, that patience and meekness is the character of Christ's The other is, that those who abound in zeal and good intentions, may greatly fall, when they prefume too much upon themselves, and do not guard against temptations by watching and prayer; which was St Peter's case. III. In the manner in which they proceeded against our Lord, when he was brought before the council of the Jews, it plainly appears that he was innocent, and that the Jews only fought for a pretence to condemn him; but, it is to be observed, that our Lord submitted to their judgment, though it was unjust, and to their outrages, exerting, on that occasion, wonderful patience and This is a noble leffon to us of patience meekness. and refignation, and we ought to conform ourselves to it. IV. It is to be observed, in the last place, that when Jesus was set before Pilate, that governor would not condemn him at first; and, that having asked our Lord, whether he was the king of the Jews, he answered, he was so, but that his kingdom was not of this world. These circumstances serve to shew the innocence of Christ; and, the confession he made in the presence of Pilate, teaches us, that we must always make a free confession of the truth, though we were fure thereby to draw upon ourselves the hatred of the world: imitating the example of our Saviour, who, as St Paul takes notice, before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, and said, he came into the world to bear witness unto the truth; though this

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this confession was to be the cause both of his condemnation and death.

## C H A P. XIX. 1-16.

PILATE causes our Lord to be scourged, and makes the soldiers treat him with indignity and contempt, thinking thereby to pacify the priests and the chief of the Jews. He declares to them, he found him innocent, and endeavours to save his life; but they insisting upon his being put to death, he consents, at last, that he should be crucified.

## REFLECTIONS.

IN the history of the condemnation of Christ, we are to confider the behaviour of Pilate, that of the Jews, and our Lord's behaviour. I. In the behaviour of Pilate, we see the character of an unjust judge; fince that governor, believing Christ to be innocent, caused him to be scourged and treated with great contempt. He thought by this to content the Jews, and prevail upon them not to infift upon his being crucified. But the Jews, feeing Pilate's irrefolution, and the regard he had for them, preffed him still more; and thus Pilate, after having already committed one unjust action, by scourging our Saviour, engaged himself in the guilt of a much more crying one, by condemning him to be put to death. Condescending to the defires of wicked men, makes them more bold and enterprizing; and, when men have once begun to do wickedly, they always go farther and farther; one fin leads them on to still greater, till at last they proceed to the highest crimes. All this shews how dangerous it is to act against light, and the conviction of our conscience; to shew a complaifance for the wicked in evil things; and to feek for evafions and expedients when we are to do our duty, and to refift temptation. II. The behaviour of the Jews, who could not be appealed either by the remonstrances of Pilate, or by what Christ had fuffered, and who continued to require that he should be crucified, shews, that when men abandon themselves to their passions, and when they have once taken their resolution, be it never so bad, they will give ear to nothing, but engage themselves deeper and deeper in it, till at last they compass their de-III. The behaviour of Christ, the great patience, moderation, and meekness with which he submitted to all the cruel and unrighteous treatment of Pilate and the Jews, ought to make a deep impreffion upon us. This is a token of his great love, and an example of great weight, to make us patient, meek, moderate, and submissive to the will of God, under all the evils that may befal us, even though we should suffer through the malice and wickedness of men.

## C H A P. XIX. 17-42.

S T John gives us here an account of the crucifixion, death, and burial of our Lord.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE history of the passion and death of our Saviour, is to be considered principally in these three views: I. As a facrifice which he offered to God for the expiation of our sins, to deliver us from death, and procure us a title to everlasting life. II. As an engagement to love this gracious redeemer, who has so loved us; and to renounce sin, which he came to destroy by his death. III. As an example of patience and humiliation, which we ought continually to set before our eyes. Besides these general considerations, we may make the four following particu-

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lar reflections upon the circumstances of this history. I. That the writing which was put upon the cross in three languages, made known to all the world the cause of Christ's condemnation, and, consequently, his innocence. II. That the feveral circumstances of his passion, and of his death, such as the dividing his garments, his thirsting, his bones not being broken, and the piercing his fide, had been foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament. For which reason, the Jews ought to have observed, by all that then happened, that Jesus was the Messiah promised by the prophets; and it is what we ought to be fully perfuaded of, by the wonderful agreement between the predictions of the Old Testament, and their accomplishment in the New, in the person of our Saviour. III. What Christ said upon the cross, to recommend the bleffed virgin to St John, shews the tender care our Lord took of his mother, and, at the fame time, his love to that apostle. IV. In the relation of the burial of our Saviour, the courage and boldness of Foseph is very remarkable; who, though he had been just condemned and put to death, was not afraid to express his respect for him; the same is very remarkable in Nicodemus, who had before been so timorous. The circumstances of his burial, ferve also to prove the truth of his death and refur-Laftly, When we reflect upon the burial of our Lord, it should teach us not to fear either the grave or death, knowing, that if we die as he did, we shall also rise as he did.

## CHAP. XX.

L CHRIST being risen from the dead, appears first to Mary Magdalen. II. Next, to the apostles in the absence of Thomas. III. And, after that, to Thomas himself.

Vol. III. P REFLEC-

### REFLECTIONS.

WE fee in this chapter, how Christ shewed him. felf after his refurrection, first, to Mary Mag. dalen, and then to all the apostles. Mary Magdalen was first informed of our Lord's resurrection by an apparition of angels, and the was the first who had the happiness of seeing him after he was risen. This was a reward for her piety and love to Christ; and thus does God make himself known to those who love him, and fincerely feek him. It appears from the account of St John, that the apostles did not, at first, believe the resurrection of our Lord, and, that they were not fully convinced, till he had given them certain and repeated proofs of it. This we see particularly in the example of St Thomas, who would not believe that Christ was risen, until he had both feen him, and touched his hands, his feet, and his fide; but, after he had thus fatisfied himself of the truth, which at first he refused to believe, he worshipped him as his Saviour and his God. Our Lord's appearing at feveral different times, ferves to prove, that he is really risen from the dead, and to confirm the testimony which the apostles bore to this truth. Christ being thus raised, we can no longer doubt that he was the Son of God, and that he has made a perfect atonement for our fins by his death. His refurrection is an image, and an undoubted pledge of our own; and therefore ought mightily to strengthen our faith and hope, and fill us with exceeding joy. Let faith in Christ risen purify and fanctify our hearts; and let us, after the example of Mary and the apostles, who were so exceedingly rejoiced to see their Master risen, and who shewed fo much zeal and love for him, worship him as our Lord and our God. So that, expressing the fincerity of our faith by our obedience, we may attain that happinels

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## CHAP. XXI.

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I. JESUS appears to the apostles near the sea of Tiberias, and gives them proofs of his resurrection. II. He confirms St Peter in his apostleship, and foretels what was to happen to that apostle, and to St John; which finishes this gospel.

#### REFLECTIONS,

I. WE fee in this chapter, first, that our Lord was pleased to affure his apostles of his refurrection, not only by shewing himself to them, and by eating in their presence, but by giving them marks of his divine power. This ought to convince us more and more of that great truth upon which all our comfort depends. II. Jefus Christ, before he reinstated St Peter in his apostleship, asked him three times, whether he loved him. Our Lord obliged him to make these three declarations, that this apostle might be more fensible of the sin he had committed in denying him three times, and repair the scandal he had thereby given. This teaches us, that Christ pardons none but fuch as confess their fins, that repair them as well as they are able, and forfake them, and return to their duty. But what he chiefly requires of us, is, to love him with all our heart, fo as to be able to fay with St Peter, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; otherwise, we deferve not to be called his disciples. III. It may be further observed, that, when St Peter had made this declaration, Christ re-established him in his apostleship, saying to him, Feed my sheep. He even foretold that he should undergo martyrdom, which shewed, that the sidelity of this apostle should

thenceforwards be proof against all temptations, Thus God pardons all those that truly repent; and thus he grants them new supplies of grace: where. fore, those whom God has thus pardoned, ought zealously and inviolably to adhere to his fervice all the rest of their lives. We see, lastly, that our Lord foretels, that St John should tarry till he came. This fignified, that this apostle should live till he had seen the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the Jews. It was a privilege Christ thought fit to grant to this disciple, whom he loved: And this promise was fulfilled, St John having lived to a great age, and long after all the other apostles, and about thiny years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and seen, before his death, the completion of all that he had heard his Lord foretel concerning this destruction, and the establishment of his kingdom.

The End of the Gospel according to St John.

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## A C T S

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#### ARGUMENT.

St Luke relates, in this book, how the Christian religion prevailed, and was established, after the ascension of our Saviour; first at Jerusalem, and afterwards in several other places, by the preaching of the Apostles, and chiefly by the ministry of St Peter and St Paul. This history contains that period of time which passed between the ascension of Christ, and the sirst imprisonment of St Paul at Rome, making the space of about twenty eight years.

## CHAP. I.

N the first chapter St Luke relates two things:

I. The ascension of our Lord. II. The choice of St Matthias to the office of an apostle.

P 3

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

THE first part of this chapter teaches us, that our Lord being rifen, continued forty days upon earth, that he might the more fully convince the apostles of the truth of his refurrection; and, to give them necessary instructions. At the end of these forty days, he was carried up into heaven in their presence, because they were to be witnesses of this great event; and angels appeared to them, affuring them, that Jesus was ascended into heaven, and that he would come from thence at the last day, This furnishes us with the most convincing proofs of the refurrection of our Lord, of his ascention, and of the certainty of his last coming; these truths being attested by the apostles, by the angels, as well as by the wonderful effects that followed his exaltation to the heavenly glory. His ascension ought to convince us, that he has a fovereign authority over all things, and that his kingdom is spiritual and heavenly. It should likewise engage us continually to raise our thoughts and our desires towards that glorious mansion where our Lord is exalted at the right hand of his Father, and where he also prepares for us an everlasting habitation; and to live in a constant practice of holinefs, in expectation of his coming In the fecond part of this chapter, there are two things principally to be observed: One, that religious affemblies are authorifed by the example of the apostles, and the first disciples of Christ, who, after his ascension to heaven, did commonly meet together to pray. The other is, that as our Lord had chosen twelve apostles, the first care of St Peter and his collegues was, to appoint an apostle in the place of Judas; that, for this purpose, they made thoice of two persons, who had been witnesses of the life and resurrection of our Saviour; but that they calt

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cast lots, and prayed the Lord to shew which of the two he had chosen, because the apostles were to be chosen immediately by Christ himself.

#### CHAP. II.

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ST Luke relates four things in this chapter. I. How the apostles received the holy Ghost upon the day of pentecost. II. St Peter's discourse to the Jews on that day. III. The effect of this discourse, which was the conversion of three thousand persons. IV. The condition the church of Jerusalem was in at that time.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ON this chapter we must observe, I. That Christ, by the descent of the holy Ghost on the apostles, fulfilled the promises he had made them of sending a comforter to them after his departure, and gave them plain and undoubted proofs of his exaltation to heaven. He bestowed on them the gift of speaking all kinds of languages, to shew they were to preach the gospel to all the nations of the earth, and to put them into a capacity of doing it. This miracle happened on a folemn day, and in the presence of a great multitude of people, who were come to Jerusalem from several parts of the world, that the tame thereof might spread on all sides, and dispose men to receive the preaching of the apostles. The end and design of the discourse which St Peter made that day, was to teach the Jews, that what happened then was foretold by the prophet Joel: that that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen again: that God had exalted him to heaven: that it was he who had given his apostles the gift of tongues; and, that all mankind ought to look upon him as the Messiah, and as their Lord and King. P 4 This

This is also the sum of the gospel, and what we ought to believe concerning Jesus Christ. III. The conversion of those three thousand Jews, who were baptifed on that day, was a surprising proof of the efficacy of St Peter's preaching; and their example shews, that a hearty forrow for fin, and an humble, teachable disposition, prepare the sinner to obey the divine will, and is the character of true penitents, the fure way to amend their lives, and put them into the way of falvation. Laftly, What St Luke tells us in this chapter, of the piety of those first Christians, of their constant attendance upon prayer and the holy eucharist, and other religious exercises; of the admirable union there was among them; of their charity; and, in general, of the innocency of their lives and manners, deserves our most serious attention. In all these respects, those first Christians, which composed the church at Jerusalem, are a partern to all churches, and to Christians of all times, to be zealous and constant in prayer, and all the parts of divine service, to live in peace and concord, to practife works of charity, and to become acceptable to God and man, by purity of manners, and by holiness of life.

## CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains, I. The account of a miracle done by St Peter in healing a cripple. And, II. What this apostle said to the Jews, to convince them that the said miracle was wrought in the name of Jesus Christ.

## REFLECTIONS.

I. THE curing this lame man shews us, that presently after the ascension of our Lord, the apostles proved before all the Jews, by illustrious miracles,

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miracles, that Christ was ascended to heaven, and that he had given them power to work miracles like those which he himself wrought. By this means the gospel continued to make great progress in Jerusalem, all the people being aftonished at this miraculous cure. II. We observe in the discourse of St Peter, the zeal and boldness with which that apostle reproached the Jews for the crime they had committed in crucifying the Lord; and, how he loudly declared, that this Jefus was the Messiah, whose coming all the prophets had foretold. Thus we ought always to confess the name of our Lord and Saviour, and bear an authentic testimony to the truth. HI. We fee here, moreover, that though the Jews had crucified the Son of God, St Peter exhorts them to repentance, and promifes them, that their fins should be blotted out, provided they would be converted, and not obstinately persist in their unbelief. Whence we may infer, that the grace of God is freely offered to all those who repent and amend, how wicked foever they have been. IV. and lastly, St Peter informs us, that Christ is that great prophet of whom Moses spake, and of whom God faid, that we ought to hear whatever he shall fay; and that those who refuse to hear him, shall be cut off from his people. This is what St Peter takes notice of in the last verse of this chapter, saying, God has fent his Son Jesus to bless us, by turning every one of us from our iniquities. The Son of God, then, was fent to turn men from their iniquities; and, therefore, without this we can have no share in the bleffings procured for us by our great Redeemer.

## CHAP. IV.

ST Luke relates, I. The imprisonment of the apostles St Peter and St John. II. Their appearing before the council of the Jews, and what happened

pened there. III. A prayer which they made to God, after they were strictly charged to speak no more in the name of Christ Jesus. IV. The state of the church of Jerusalem; and above all, the wonderful love and charity that reigned there.

## REFLECTIONS.

bey had coornitted in IN this chapter we fee, I. The accomplishment of what our Saviour had told the apostles, namely, that they should be cast into prison, and brought before magistrates for his sake; but, it is likewise to be observed, that the severe treatment they met with did not shake their constancy; and that the number of Christians increased daily, notwithstanding the opposition of the Jews. II. St Luke informs us, that the apostles appearing before the council, spake there with a holy boldness, and with such evidence, that their enemies were amazed at it, and had nothing to charge them with. This was an effect of that divine power with which the apostles were endowed, and of the promises Christ had made them to assist them, and give them fuch wisdom as could not be resisted. III. The zeal which the apostles shewed upon the magistrates forbidding them to preach any longer the gospel, and their answer, that it was not fit to obey man rather than God, is an example, which shews that nothing should hinder us from obeying God; and, in particular, that the ministers of the gospel, who, through fear of men, or any worldly motive, are afraid to fay or do what God commands, are cowards and prevaricators. IV. The fervent prayer which the apostles offered up to God, to implore his affiftance, shews the courage and confidence with which they were animated. And the tokens God gave them of his presence and favour, by shaking the place where they were affembled, was a confirmation

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mation to them that God heard and accepted their prayer, and that he would always protect them. Those who fear God and seek his glory, are sure to find a powerful assistance and relief in prayer. God never fails to hear those who thus call upon him; and, when we defend his cause, we ought not to fear the vain efforts of men. V. What is said at the end of this chapter, about the union and agreement among the believers at Jerusalem, and of the use they made of their goods, shews, that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of peace and concord, that true Christians have but one heart and one soul, and that they willingly and freely exercise charity towards the necessitous.

## CHAP. V.

I. ST Luke gives an account of the fin of Ananias and Sapphira, and the punishment God insticted on them. II. He makes mention next of the miracles of the apostles, and the wonderful progress of the gospel at Jerusalem. III. The apostles are imprisoned a second time, but God delivers them by an angel, and they continue to preach the gospel. IV. They are brought again before the council, which condemns them to be whipped, and forbids them to preach any longer the doctrine of Christ.

## REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three reflections to be made upon the history of Ananias. I. God struck that man and his wife dead for having lied to St Peter, that their example might keep in awe all the members of the church, and support the authority of the apostles in the beginning of the preaching of the gospel, and to shew the divinity of the doctrine they preached. II. This event teaches us, that God knows mens

mens hearts, and the most hidden things; and, that though men may be deceived, yet he cannot; and, that those who lie to men, and particularly to their spiritual guides, do lie to God, and expose themselves to his vengeance. III. It appears from hence, that it is a great fin to make use of falshood and deceit in the exercise of charity; that it is in our own power to give, or withhold our hand; but, when once we have devoted a thing to God and to religious uses, we are not allowed to take it back, nor even to retain the smallest part of it. IV. We must particularly observe what is faid in this chapter concerning the furprifing miracles wrought by the apostles, and the prodigious increase of the church at Jerusalem, as also the love and reverence that every one had for the Christians: these are authentic proofs of the divinity of the christian doctrine, and its efficacy. And fince this progress of the gospel was the fruit, not only of the miracles of the apostles, but likewise of the union that reigned among the faithful, and of the innocency of their manners, we may learn from thence, how effectual the good lives of Christians are, to render the religion of Christ venerable, and to establish it in the world. The apostles were a second time imprisoned, but God in a miraculous manner caused the gates of the prison to be opened by an angel. This was a fresh proof of the divine protection, which must needs have filled them with joy and confidence, and ought to have convinced their enemies, that it was in vain to oppose the preaching of the gospel. We see that the apostles, coming out of the prison, went immediately to teach in the temple, notwithstanding the charge they had received; and, that being summoned for it before the council, they spoke there with great wisdom and boldness, declaring, that they were obliged to obey God rather than men. This instance of courage and zeal in the apostles, is a lesson to us always to follow of the nor in from us. again but to de them dreff advice to de

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the dictates of our conscience, without being afraid of the threatnings of men; and that neither the orders nor interdicts of magistrates should ever hinder us from obeying God, and doing what he commands us. Observe further, That the council being enraged against the apostles, would have put them to death, but God made use of the prudent advice of Gamaliel, to deliver them from the danger that threatned them. The manner in which this wife fenator addreffed the council, shews, that pious and moderate advice ought to be followed; that we ought never to do any thing through passion and rash zeal, especially in matters of religion; that the defigns of which God is not the author, are fooner or later defeated of themselves; but that those which proceed from him are infallibly fulfilled, in spite of the oppolition of men; and that those who withstand them fight against God. The last reflection is, that as the apostles, having been condemned to be whipped, rejoiced that they had the honour to fuffer fuch a diffrace for the fake of Christ, and continued to preach the gospel; thus ought we constantly, and with joy, to bear the evils which our duty may expole us to, and persevere in it.

## CHAP. VI.

THIS chapter contains two parts. I. In the first we read of the appointment of the order of deacons, whose office it was to distribute the alms of the church. And, in the second, the accusation against St Stephen before the council of the Jews.

## REFLECTIONS.

I. WE have here an account of the institution of deacons, who were appointed by the apostles to distribute the alms of the faithful. Though this office

office be at this time abolished in most Christian churches, through the fault of men, and the diforder that has crept into it in feveral respects, it is never theless a divine institution, and very useful for the edification of the church. II. Since God thought fit that the distribution of alms should be committed to prudent persons, and such as were filled with the holy Ghost; it appears that charity is a most important duty, that the alms of the faithful ought to be distributed with great prudence and wisdom, and that it should be done by men of integrity, and that fear God, and that they should be appointed by the church; and, in general, none should be put in ecclefiaftical offices, but perfons that have a good testimony, and that are of known piety and probity. III. St Stephen, one of the feven deacons, a man re markable for his faith and zeal, and the miracles he wrought, was not long before he felt the hatred of the Jews. He was accused of being an enemy to God and the law of Moses, and brought before the council to be condemned; but he appeared before them with a holy boldness, and in such a manner as furprifed his very judges. Good men have in all ages been exposed to the hatred and calumnies of the wicked; but their injustice and violence towards them, does not hinder them from discharging their duty with courage, nor from fulfilling the obligations of their calling, and of their conscience. managed as only to hear say then

## CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter contains, I. The discourse St Stephen made before the council of the Jews; And, II. The relation of his martyrdom and death.

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## REFLECTIONS.

I. THE design of St Stephen's discourse before the council, was to prove, that he was neither an enemy to God nor the law, as he was accused to be; but that he worshipped the God of Abraham, and of the patriarchs. II. That Christ was the Messiah that was to be born of the posterity of Abraham, and whose coming Moses and the prophets had foretold. III. That the covenant of God, and his fervice, were not confined to the nation of the Jews, nor to the temple of Jerusalem, nor to the ceremonial worship which Moses had prescribed. IV. That the Jews had at all times been rebellious against God; that they had rejected and perfecuted the prophets; and that therefore it was not strange that they should reject Christ. and persecute his fervants. We observe in this difcourse of St Stephen, his great zeal, and the holy liberty which he took in reproaching the Jews for the hardness of their hearts, though he knew very well, in speaking thus, he exposed himself to their rage, and to the danger of losing his life. The Jews were so enraged, that they condemned him to be stoned; but God, for his encouragement, having caused him to fee heaven open, and Jesus Christ sitting on his right hand, he endured with constancy that cruel death, calling upon the Lord with his last breath, and praying for those who put him to death. This death of the first martyr of the church, should teach us to undergo with courage all the evils which the profession of the truth may bring upon us, and even leath itself, if we be called to it; to pardon those that do us the greatest harm, and to pray for them. This example is a further proof how fweet the death of true believers is, and with what comfort it is atended; which should greatly encourage us to godiness, that at our last hour we may likewise commit

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# CHAP. VIII.

CT Luke relates here, I. The persecution that was raised against the church of Jerusalem after the death of St Stephen. And, II. How St Philip preached the gospel at Samaria. III. The history of the conversion of a stranger, a great man, who was treasurer of Candace queen of Ethiopia.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE find that the death of St Stephen, and the perfecution that was raifed against the church of Jerusalem, turned to the advancement of the gospel, fince the believers, who were thereupon difperfed, preached the word of God in several places, Thus the perfecutions which the first enemies of the church raised against it, contributed towards its increase, and to the spreading the religion of Christ which the people of Samaria gave to Simon the magician, shews, that they who know not the truth, are easily seduced by impostors; but the change that which happened in that city, after St Philip had preached the gospel there, shews, that truth will triumph over which error and salshood. St Luke observes, that Simon must be miracles wrought by St Philip; which proves, that is well miracles wrought by St Philip; which proves, that hat we the wicked are sometimes affected with the excellency of the gospel, so far as even to embrace the profession of it; but not acting upon good principles, sterile conversion is not sincere. It is added, that saptize simon offered money to St Peter, to obtain the power nade ke of communicating the holy Ghost, and of working ion of miracles; more and more. II. What is faid of the credit miracles; Vol.

miracles; and, that St Peter being filled with indignation, denounced the judgment of God against him? upon which we must observe, that it is a detestable impiety to make religion subservient to covetousness and ambition, and to pretend to buy or fell holy things, after what manner foever. Nevertheless, St Peter exhorted Simon to repent, and even that wicked man, frighted with that heavy denunciation, intreated the apostles to interceed for him. This teaches us, that we ought never wholly to abandon the greateft finners, nor refuse them the affistance of our exhortations and prayers. III. God at that time called an officer of queen Candace to the Christian faith, to shew that the gospel would be soon preached to all nations; and, by means of this man, to foread the true religion throughout Ethiopia. This great man, who was one of the Gentile profelytes, who renounced idolatry, was come to worship God at ferusalem, and was employed in reading the scriptures, when God fent Philip to instruct him. We the interpolation of the case may learn from hence, that providence takes a par-

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duty. Laftly, As this eunuch, after he was bap. tized, returned with joy unto his own country, we ought also highly to esteem the happiness we enjoy in being called to faith in Christ; and the advantage of being made members of his church, should be all our comfort, and all our joy.

#### CHAP. IX. 1-22.

HIS is the history of the conversion of & Paul.

#### REFLECTIONS.

W E ought most carefully to attend to this hiftory, and confider, I. That St Paul, who was fo excellent an apostle, was, before his converfion, while he was still a Jew, a declared enemy of the Christian religion, and a severe persecuter of the This apostle tells us himself, that God Christians. called him in that condition, that he might make him an illustrious example of his mercy towards fin-Nevertheless, it must be remembered, that if Saul persecuted the church, it was through ignorance and a false zeal, whilst he even thought that he did what was pleasing to God; as for the rest of his life, it was unblameable. When men fin not through malice and obstinacy, but through ignorance and the force of prejudice, they are more susceptible of God's mercy, and more eafily recovered from that flate II. The means which the Lord made use of for Saul's conversion, are very remarkable. When he was going to Damascus to persecute the Christians, Christ stopped him near that city, by an apparition that filled him with terror; he spoke to him from heaven, and struck him with blindness. Our Lord proceeded in this manner, because the disposition and temper of Saul was fuch as made it necessary to us

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very violent methods to cure him of his prejudices, and to render him tractable. Thus God, in his goodness and wisdom, makes use of the most proper means to bring back finners from their errors. III. These words, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? shew, that Christ looks upon that which is done against his members, and against his church, as done against himself; and Saul's answer, Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do? expresses the humility and docility of finners who are truly fensible of their fins. When God calls them they obey, and give up themselves intirely to him, and follow his commands. IV. It must be considered, that as soon as God had prepared Saul to hearken to him, and to receive what should be told him, he fent him to Anamias to be informed by him what he was to do, and that in the mean time, he prepared Ananias, by a vision, to go and visit Saul and instruct him; thus God disposed matters with great wisdom to finish the work of Saul's conversion. V. Lastly, Saul, after fasting and praying three days, recovered his fight, and was instructed and baptized by Ananias; and prefently after began to preach the gospel in the fynagogues of the Jews. We ought to admire the power and goodness of God in this event, so happy for St Paul, and fo beneficial to the whole church ; and, this great and fudden change which was wrought in this apostle, shews, that such as are sincerely converted, do intirely alter their opinion and behaviour, giving open and certain proofs of the fincerity of their conversion.

## C H A P. IX. 23-+3.

I. S T Paul, after his conversion, being persecuted by the Jews at Damascus, went to Jerusalem, from whence he was driven by a fresh persecution,

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from Lord and forced to fly to Cefarea, and from thence to Tarfus. II. St Luke describes the happy condition of the churches of Judea, and of the neighbouring parts. And, III. The miracle of the healing of Eneas, and the raising of Tabitha from the dead.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ROM this portion of scripture we may gather, I. That as foon as St Paul was converted, and began to preach the gospel, he was perfecuted by the Jews. God thought fit, by that means, to try the fidelity of this apostle, and to teach him to suffer for Jesus Christ. Thus it generally happens to those who are refolved to follow Christ, and lead a godly life; they are exposed to the hatred of the world, and to many trials, but none of these things surprise them; they persevere in their duty in spite of oppofition, as Saul, in spite of the rage of the Jews, continued to preach the gospel, even in the city of Jerusalem. II. What St Luke says of the happy state of the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, suggests two reflections; one, that if God permits the church to be persecuted, he likewise gives it some relaxation; the other, that churches are happy and flourishing when they walk in the fear of the Lord, and the gifts of the holy Ghost are multiplied in them. The two miracles related at the end of this chapter, prove, that the apostles wrought the same miracles as our Lord had done whilft he was upon earth, which contributed to the conversion of a great number of people. We have particularly, in the history of Tabitha, a noble example of piety and works of charity for all Christians, and especially those of her own sex; and the raising to life this holy woman, may be looked on as a reward that God was pleased to grant to her piety and faith, and as a proof

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proof that should confirm us in the belief of the refurrection, and the hope of a better life.

#### CHAP. X.

THIS chapter contains an account of the conversion of Cornelius the centurion to the Christian religion. This man was a pagan by birth, but worshipped the true God.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS hiftory is recorded to fhew us how the gospel began first to be preached to the Gentiles. We should admire the method which providence made use of for converting Cornelius. God fent an angel to him, to direct him to fend for St Peter, and prepared that apostle to go to Cornelius; which he would not have done, if God had not revealed it to him, that he ought to look upon no man as unclean, and that the gospel was to be declared to the Gentiles as well as Jews. . To this alhuded the vision of the vessel, in which were creatures, that the Jews, by their law, were forbid to eat of. II. Besides this general consideration, it may be observed, that Cornelius, though engaged in the profession of arms, was nevertheless a devout and charitable man, and one that feared God; for which reason God sent an angel, to assure him his prayers and alms were had in remembrance, and brought him to the knowledge of Christ, by the ministry of St Peter. We may learn from hence, how acceptable to God works of piety and charity are, and that he bestows greater light, and more grace on those who have an upright heart, and call upon him, and fear him. III. St Peter's discourse to Cornelius and his friends, comprehends the substance of the doctrine which the apostles preached,

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that God had fent his Son to bring falvation to the Jews, that they had put him to death, but that he was risen again, and was to be the judge of quick These are the most important truths of religion, which ought to be received by all Christians. They represent faith in Christ, and holiness of life. as the only means of falvation; which is particularly pointed at in these words of St Peter: That God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation, be that feareth bim, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with bim. And, that Whosoever believes in Christ, shall receive remission of sins through his name. IV. The attention, the submission, and obedience with which Cornelius, and all his house, heard St Peter, ought to teach us to receive the word of God with the fame dispositions when it is declared to us. V. While the apostle was speaking to Cornelius, the holy Ghost came upon them that heard the word, and they received the gift of tongues. God, by working the fame kind of miracle in behalf of the Gentiles, as he had done for the apostles on the day of pentecost, most evidently shewed, that he intended to make the Gentiles also partakers of his grace; which obliges us to render thanks to God; us, I fay, who were formerly heathens, forasmuch as he then vouchfafed to admit the Gentiles into his covenant, and to pour forth his spirit and grace upon them, as well as upon the Jews.

## CHAP. XI.

THIS consists of two parts: I. In the former we see that the Jews of Jerusalem, who had been converted to the Christian religion, being offended that St Peter should go to Cornelius, that was a Gentile, they were informed by this apostle how God had shewed him, that he should preach the gofpel

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pel to Cornelius, and of the success of his preaching; at which the Christians of Ferusalem greatly rejoiced. II. In the latter part St Luke relates, how the gospel spread itself in several places, and particularly at Antioch: he makes mention also of a prophet named Agabus, who foretold a famine.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

WE fee, in the former part of this chapter, that the Christians of Jerusalem were offended at first, because St Peter had been with Cornelius; because it was not lawful for the Jews to have any familiar intercourse with the Gentiles. But when they knew that this apostle went to him by the order of God, and that even the holy Ghost had been given to Cornelius, and those that were with him, they were pacified, and rejoiced that God was pleafed thus to call the Gentiles to falvation. This teaches us, that instead of being jealous of the favours that God bestows upon others, we ought to rejoice, especially when they are called to repentance and everlaiting life. This happy event, which occasioned so much joy to the faints at Jerusalem, and made them cry out, "God has then granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life!" ought ever to be matter of joy and thanksgiving to us, since it directly respects us. Upon the latter part of this chapter there are three things to be observed: The first is, That the disperfion of the church of Jerusalem, and the persecution that was raised against the Christians, contributed to spread the gospel in several places, and to establish feveral churches, particularly the church of Antioch, where the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians. The fecond, That these churches were founded and kept up by the ministry of Barnabas, of Paul, and other persons that laboured for their edification. This shews, that the ministry of the fervants Q 4

fervants of God is of great use in the church, provided it be performed by good men, and such as are filled with faith and the holy Ghost, as were those St Luke mentions. The third consideration relates to the prediction that Agabus made of a famine that was to happen. This prediction proves, that God knows things future, and that nothing comes to pass in this world but by his providential will. And the resolution the Christians took to make a collection for their brethren in Judea, is an example that should stir us up to assist those that are in want, and especially those that are our brethren, and the members of Jesus Christ; and even to prevent their wants.

## CHAP. XII.

ST Luke relates three things in this chapter: I. The martyrdom of St James, brother to St John. II. The imprisonment of St Peter, and his miraculous deliverance. III. The manner of king Herod's death.

## REFLECTIONS.

In this chapter we see, I. How the apostle St fames, as well as St Stephen, sealed the truth of the gospel with his blood; and that the Christian religion was established by the sufferings of those that preached it, which confirms the truth and divinity of it. II. God, who had permitted St fames to be put to death, did likewise permit St Peter to be imprisoned by king Herod, but this apostle was miraculously delivered by an angel, who was sent to open the prison doors, and set him at liberty. This wonderful deliverance gives us occasion to own, that though God does sometimes allow the wicked to execute their designs, yet when it pleases him, he restrains them, and sets bounds to their wickedness, and

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that exerenefs, and and that he always watches over his faithful fervants. We likewise see, by this event, how powerful prayer is, since the church of Jerusalem obtained the deliverance of St Peter, by the prayers they put up to God for him. III. The death of Herod, who was eaten of worms for a punishment of his pride, is worthy of our attention. This event, which is likewise related by Josephus, the Jewish historian, shews, that God confounds the proud; and particularly that the persecutors of the church do commonly make a fatal end; and that cruel and haughty princes, sooner or latter, receive the punishment due to their wickedness.

#### CHAP. XIII.

OT Paul and St Barnabas go from Antioch to Oyprus, and from thence to Paphos, where St Paul smote a Jewish impostor with blindness, and where he converted to the faith the proconful Sergius Paulus, who was the chief magistrate of that island. Il. After this, St Paul, coming to Antioch, in Pifidia, preaches to the Jews of that city, shewing that God, according to the promises he had made to their fathers, had fent Jesus Christ into the world; that this Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen again; and, that all those who should believe in him, would obtain falvation. III. Several persons, as well Jews as Gentiles, believing the preaching of St Paul, the Jews were fo enraged against him, as to drive him away and Barnabas; but the apostles declared to them, that fince they rejected the gospel, they would, from that time forwards, preach it to the Gentiles, and fo left them.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE see, in the beginning of this chapter, that St Paul and St Barnabas, passing through feveral places of Asia and Greece, by order of the holy Ghoft, and, after that the ministers of the church of Antioch had prayed and fasted, did succefsfully preach the gospel in those parts. tokens of the divinity of their calling; but we have, especially, one remarkable proof in the conversion of the governor of Paphos, and in the miraculous punishment of Elimas, who would have diffuaded the governor from embracing the Christian religion. We see in these two persons, one of whom believed the preaching of St Paul, as the other opposed it with all his might, that if the word of God faves those who receive it, it will condemn those who are not converted by it; and, that those who withstand the truth, and turn away others from faith and piety, do draw upon themselves the severest judgments of God. St Paul's discourse in the synagogue of Antioch, is an abstract of the Christian doctrine. This apostle proves to the Jews that Christ was born of the feed of David, and that he is the promifed Messiah; which he shews by the testimony of John the baptist, and by the prediction of the prophets. He then declares, that this Jesus, who was crucified at Jerusalem, was raised from the dead, in conformity to the prophecies of the old testame n Lastly, he teaches them, that the design of the coming of Christ, was, to obtain for men the remission of fins; that accordingly, all fuch as believed in him should be justified; but that those who rejected him, should be excluded from falvation. Since this is the fum of the Christian religion, we ought feriously and continually to attend to it, and to obferve, that it is only by faith in Jefus Christ, and by obefor vera Jew was

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obedience to the gospel, that we can be saved. As for the effect of St Paul's discourse, we see that several believed his preaching; but that most of the Jews continued obstinately in their unbelief; which was the reason why this apostle told them, that he would turn to the Gentiles. This shews what different effects the preaching of the gospel produces; that some grow better by it, others reject it, and, instead of yielding to truth, haughtily oppose it. But if there are unbelievers, who continue in their blindness, which leads them to destruction, they are themselves the only cause of it, since none are excluded from everlasting life, but those who judge themselves unworthy of it.

## CHAP. XIV.

I. S T Paul and St Barnabas preach at Iconium.

II. From thence they go to Lystra, where having healed an impotent man, the inhabitants of that place took them for gods, which gave occasion to St Paul to exhort them to renounce idolatry. III. Soon after, this apostle was stoned by the people of the town, whom the Jews had stirred up against him; but God having saved his life, he went to other places, and then returned to Antioch.

## REFLECTIONS.

WE find here in general, that the apostles exercised their ministry with great zeal, and in the midst of persecutions; and that St Paul in particular felt every where the rage of the Jews, since he was in danger of being stoned with Barnabas at leonium, and asterwards was actually stoned at Lystra, and even left for dead. We likewise find that God preserved the apostles in the dangers to which they were continually exposed; that he wrought great

great miracles by them, and that, if they were dif. pleased with the great opposition they met with from the Jews, they had the comfort of bringing feveral Gentiles to the faith. II. The zeal St Paul shewed when the inhabitants of Lystra took him and Barna. bas for gods, and would have paid them divine honours, is very remarkable. Those who fear God, and have a true zeal, never feek their own glory; their great aim should be to glorify God alone, and to cause others to know and worship him. Ill. St Paul's discourse to the Lycaonians, who were idolators, shews, that God did at all times reveal himfelf to mankind, by the works of nature and providence, and has always given them proofs of his goodness. Upon which we ought to consider, that if the bleffings God beftows upon men in a natural state, should engage them to love and serve him, we are much more obliged fo to do; we, I fay, to whom he has revealed himself by the gospel, and to whom he has given such strong proofs of his love, by sending his fon Jesus Christ into the world. Lastly, St Luke takes notice, towards the end of this chapter, of the care which the apostles took to go to several places, that they might exhort the faithful, and chiefly fettle paftors in every church, which shews the need Christians have of instructions and exhortations; and, particularly, the necessity of pastors and teachers; and that the will of God is, that there should be every where among Christians ministers to teach, to exhort, and to govern the church.

## CHAP. XV.

I. A Dispute being raised in the church of Antioch, because some Jews, who had been converted to Christianity, insisted that the Gentiles, who embraced the same faith, ought to be circumcised as the Mossification The Genther I then pel, casio the a in a line

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the Jews, and observe the ceremonies of the law of Moses; St Paul and St Barnabas were sent to Jeru-salem, to consult the apostles upon this question. II. The apostles being met together, declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to observe circumcision and the legal ceremonies, but that it would be sufficient for them to believe in Christ Jesus, and to obey the gospel, and to abstain from those things which might occasion them to fall into idolatry. And this is what the the apostles communicated to the church of Antioch, in a letter which they sent by St Paul and St Barnabas. III. After which, those two apostles departed from thence to other places, to preach the gospel.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE have here a very plain explication of the doctrine of justification; and what is here faid ferves to clear other places of the new testament. which treat of this doctrine; on which account this chapter deserves a particular attention: It must be observed here, that the question proposed was not to know whether the Gentiles, in order to falvation, were obliged to keep the commandments of Christ, and to do good works; no one then doubted of this truth, nor was there any dispute about it. But the question was, whether they were obliged to submit to circumcifion and the rest of the ceremonies of the law of Moses, as certain Jews converted to Christianity pretended? It must be next remembered. that the apostles determined two things upon this question: The first, that the converted Gentiles ought not to be obliged to circumcifion, and the practice of the Jewish ceremonies; but, that it was sufficient to falvation, that they should fincerely believe in Christ. This the apostles proved, 1. Because God had poured his spirit upon the Gentiles as well as Jews, and had given them faith: And, 2. From the very na-

ture of the Mosaical ceremonies, as well as by the predictions of the prophets. This is also the doctrine which St Paul lays down in his epiftles, where he teaches, that we are justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, without the works of the law. The second thing which the apostles declared, was, that the Gentiles " should abstain, however, from what had been facrificed to idols, from things strangled, and from blood, and from fornication." The reason of this prohibition was, because the use of these things, as well as fornication, were part of the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles; and that therefore, if Christians did not abstain from these things, it might have drawn them into idolatry, and confirmed the Gentiles in their false religion. It appears from hence, that the apostles have not excused men from the observation of the moral law, but that they have only dispensed with the ceremonial law. And that, on the contrary, in teaching that we are justified by faith, they establish the necessity of good works, since faith cannot be fincere if it does not produce good works, and obedience to the gospel. By the separation of St Barnabas from St Paul, mentioned at the end of this chapter, we find that these two excellent servants of God were of different opinions in some things; but this difference did not disunite them, nor hinder them from labouring inceffantly in advancing the kingdom of Christ.

## CHAP. XVI.

ST Paul calls Timothy to the ministry; and, after having been in divers places, he arrives at Philippi, a city of Macedonia, where he preaches the gospel, and where a woman named Lydia was converted to the Christian faith. While St Paul was at Philippi, a tumult was raised against him, because he had delivered a maid servant that was possessed.

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with an evil spirit. He and Silas were both scourged and cast into prison, but being wonderfully delivered by God, the jailor was converted to Christianity, and the magistrates of Philippi intreated the apostles to depart, excusing themselves for their ill treatment of them.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THERE are two things to be observed in the calling Timothy to the holy ministry. The first is, that Timothy, who was so excellent a servant of God, had been educated in piety; and that though he was young, every body gave him a good character; by which we fee that none should be admitted to the ministry, but persons that fear God from their youth, and have the testimony of a holy life. The second, that St Paul, who condemned circumcifion, when impofed on the Gentiles as a necessary duty, did, notwithstanding, circumcife Timothy, lest the Jews should reject his ministry, under pretence that his father was a Gentile. This is an example of prudence, condefcenfion, and charity, by which we are taught, that in indifferent matters we must submit as much as possible to the weak, avoid every thing that may give offence, and regard what may most contribute to the peace and edification of the church. II. St Luke fays, that the spirit did not suffer St Paul to go to Asia, and that he was warned by a vision to preach the gospel in Macedonia; upon which we are to obferve, that it was God who guided the apostles to the places where they could do most good, and where their presence was most necessary. God does not always think fit that the gospel should be preached in all places, but reveals it to some rather than to others, for wife, for just and good reasons. III. St Luke tells us, that there was a woman called Lydia, who heard St Paul, and that God opened her heart to at-

tend unto the things that were spoken by the apostles, This shews us, that faith is produced by hearing the word of God, and by the efficacy of his grace, which opens the heart, and disposes it for the reception of the truth. IV. St Paul having delivered a maid fervant that was possessed with an evil spirit, her masters, instead of being affected with the miracle, perceiving they had loft the profit she brought them by divination, stirred up the magistrates against the apostle. This shews how great power there is in felf-interest, to excite the passions of men, and to hinder them from knowing and receiving the truth. St Paul and Silas, being scourged and imprisoned by order of the magistrates of Philippi, shewed a wonderful constancy in the pains and indignities they endured, finging praises to God in the prison. Thus Christians receive, not only with patience, but likewife with joy, the evils they are exposed to for the fake of Christ. God opened the doors of the prison by an earthquake, and the apostles had the happiness of converting the jailor. This is a remarkable instance of God's protecting his faithful fervants; and shews, that all that was done against the apostles turned to the glory of God, to the propagation of the gospel, and their greatest comfort. Lastly, Observe, that St Paul pleaded that he was a citizen of Rome, to oblige the magistrates of Philippi to own their fault in causing him and Silas to be scourged and imprisoned, without any form of justice. This he did to shew his innocency, and for the honour of the golpel which he preached. It appears plain enough, that St Paul did not, however, fay this for fear of fufferings, fince if he had declared at first that he was a citizen of Rome, he might have avoided both the scourging and imprisonment. Thus we see, that he joined great prudence to an admirable patience, and a profound humility.

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I. S T Paul and Silas preached the gospel with success at Thessalonica; but the Jews having stirred up the magistrates and people of that city against them, they go to Berea, and there convert several persons. II. But being persecuted there also by the Jews, St Paul leaves that town and goes to Athens, a samous city of Greece. He there preaches the gospel, and converts several persons.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE arrival of St Paul and Silas at Theffalonica, and at Berea, their preaching in those two cities, and the tumult which the Jews raifed against them, shews that St Paul fainted not; that the Jews were the most bitter enemies of the gospel, persecuting it in every place; but that they had likewise the comfort of gaining every where fouls to Christ. II. What is faid in praise of the faithful at Berea, who chearfully received the word of God, and examined the scriptures, to see whether what St Paul preached to them was agreeable thereto; teaches us to receive the truth with docility and readiness, and at the same time with knowledge and discernment; and that every Christian has a right to examine by the word of God, the doctrine that is preached to him, that he may receive nothing that is not conformable to that divine word, which is the only rule of our faith, and submit obediently to every thing agreeable to it. III. We observe in this chapter, the great zeal of St Paul. Grieved to fee the city of Athens overrun with idolatry, he resolved to preach the gospel there; and being intreated by some philosophers to inform them of the doctrine he taught, did not scruple to discourse to VOL. III. them them concerning the true religion. In imitation of this apostle, we ought to be finderely concerned when we fee men engaged in fin and error, and to lay hold of all occasions that offer to deliver them from it. We observe in the discourse St Paul made to the Athenians, on one hand, the wisdom and prudence of this apostle, who took occasion, even from their superstitions, to speak to them of the true God; and on the other, the evidence and force with which he proved, by the clearest and strongest arguments, and by the teffinony of their own poets, that there is but one God, almighty and all-gracious, who has created all things; and that it is an extreme folly, and the greatest of errors, to worship idols of gold, filver, or stone, as did the Gentiles. The discourse of St Paul contains the principal truths of religion: that there is but one only God, creator and preserver of the world; that this God is not far from every one of us; that he does not stand in need of our fervice, or any thing elle from us, fince it is he that gives us all life, motion, and being. But above all, we ought to attend to these words, which are the abstract of the doctrine and duties of the gospel, that God now commandeth all men every where to repent; because be bath appointed a day, in which be will judge the world in nighteousness, by that man whom he bath ordained. These truths, which St Paul once taught in an idolatrous city, are the truths which we profels to believe; but can be of no fervice to us, any farther than they flir us up to ferve God, to feat him, to love him, and to obey the gospel. We fee Jaffly, that this discourse of St Paul was attended with the conversion of some perions, but in the greatest part of those who heard him continued with it in unbelief. Thus the preaching of the word of the chout p

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I T Paul dwells at Corinth a year and a half, where he converts a great number of people, and is accused by the Jews before the magistrates. II. From thence he goes to Ephefus, to Jerusalem, to Antioch, and other places, to vifit the churches, and to confirm them in the faith. III. mention made at the end of this chapter of Apollos, who was a minister of the gospel, famous for his zeal, and his great talents.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. I N what St Luke relates of the stay St Paul made at Corinth, we may observe the zeal wherewith this apostle laboured every where for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; his disinterestedness and prudence, which appear in his choosing rather to work with his own hands for his subsistance, than to be maintained at the charge of the church; the troubles he met with from the Jews; and laftly, the divine protection in his afflictions; and the comfort he had in converting a great number of people in that city, and of founding there a very noble church. Thus the Christian religion was more and more established by the preaching of the apostles, and in spite of all opposition of the Jews, and of other enemies of the truth. II. The several journies and voyages of St Paul, related in this chapter, shew that he was continually employed in the duties of his calling, and that he laboured ntinued with indefatigable application in the edification of ord of the churches. Thus all true and fincere Christians,

God but particularly the faithful ministers of Christ Jefus. R 2

fus, exert all their firength, dedicate all their time, yea, their whole lives, to promoting the glory of God, and the falvation of men. III. What is here faid to the honour of Apollos, of his zeal and eloquence, and his other great gifts, and of the extraordinary effects of his ministry, should make us acknowledge, that God grants a most valuable blessing to the church, when he sends zealous teachers and ministers, and well skilled in the holy scriptures, and endowed with the necessary talents and gifts for instruction and edification; and it ought likewise to engage us to beseech God that he would always raise up such men.

### CHAP. XIX.

I. S T Paul preaches the gospel in the city of Ephe-Jus, and does several miracles there. II. Certain Jews, attempting to cast out evil spirits in the name of Jesus, are ill treated by those who were possessed. III. Several persons addicted to magick were converted, and gave publick tokens of their repentance. IV. St Luke adds an account of the tumult raised against St Paul, by a silversmith, named Demetrius, who made great advantage by selling little silver shrines, formed after the model of a samous temple which was in this city, and which was devoted to a goddess of the heathens, named Diana. That man, finding that St Paul by preaching against idols made him lose all his profit, stirred up the people against him, but the riot was appeased by the clerk of the city.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the wonderful fuccess of St Paul's ministry. That aportle baptized at Epbesus certain disciples, who, ill that

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then, had only been instructed in the doctrine of John the baptist; but as soon as they were baptized in the name of Jefus Chrift, and St Paul had laid his hands on them, they received the miraculous gifts of the holy Ghoft. Belides thele, he converted there at great number of persons, in spite of the opposition of the Jews; he there wrought furprifing miracles & and feveral people that practifed the magick art renounced their superstition and their impiety. Thus did this apostle every where advance the kingdom of Christ, and destroy that of the devil. What happened to the Jewish exorcists, who, endeavouring to cast out devils in the name of Jesus, were ill treated by those who were possessed by the evil spints, tended to convince the Jews, and all the world, that none but the apostles, and such as believed in Christ, were really able to work miracles, and had power over the unclean spirits: the divine efficacy of the name of Jesus, and the excellence of his religion is displayed only by good men; but it does not belong to wicked men, or to hypocrites, to take the name of the Lord in their mouths. Luke informs us, that several people living at Epbehis converted by St Paul's preaching, came and confessed their fins, among whom there were some, who having practifed magick and unlawful arts, those rather publickly to burn their books treating upon those subjects, than to sell them, though they would have brought them in confiderable fums. This example is remarkable; it teaches us, that those who are truly penitent, do not scruple to own their aults, to give publick tokens of their repentance, and to renounce all that has been to themselves, or night be to others, an occasion of fin and feandal, hough it be never to precious, or dear and profitable them. What, is principally to be observed conerning the fedition which was raised at Epbesus against ther

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vonderat apo ho, til against St Paul, is, That it was raised by some crafts-men, who feared that if the people left of worth pping idols, their trade would lofe its credit, and their gain be diminished; and to ftir up the people, they pretended a regard to religion, and a zeal for the goddes Diana. Nothing acts with greater force upon the minds of men than the love of money; nothing railes their paffions fo much; they cannot bear the truth, when it is contrary to their interest; and when they can do it, they conceal their interest under the mask of teligion. This great tumult was at last, with some difficulty, appealed by the town-clerk; and St. Paul by this means delivered from the danger that threatned him. By which we fee that tumults and feditions are very dangerous, and therefore we ought to avoid every thing that tends to promote them; and that wife, men are bound to prevent and to calm them by all possible tate name of Jefus, and the excellence of heansm

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I. ST Faul leaves Ephofus, and goes to Troom of that city, and raises one from the dead. II. From thence he goes to Miletus, where having sent for the pastors of the church of Ephofus, he gives them a very serious exhortation; and then takes his leave of them.

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That St Paul arriving at Troas, went to the place where the Christians of that city were met to gether on the first day of the week to break break that is to say, to celebrate the Lord's supper, and preached to them very late in the night. From them

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thence we may gather, that the apolities and first Christians affembled themselves to ferve God and for mutual edification; that Sunday was fet apart for that purpose; that the holy sacrament was admin il tered in those meetings, and discourses made for the instruction and exhortation of the faithful; and consequently, that these practices are as old as Christianity itself, and of divine institution. II. The second thing which deferves our attention, is, that St Paul restored a young man to life, who fell from the upper room of the house where the believers were gathered together. This was a miracle very remarkable, which, without doubt, comforted the Christians of Troas, and ffrengthened them in the religion of Christ. But what most of all deserves to be considered in this chapter, is the discourse which St Paul made to the paftors of Epbesus before he left them: in which we fee, with how great integrity, zeal, and difinterestedness he discharged his ministry; his constancy under afflictions, his great piety, the care he took to exhort and teach for three years together, both in publick, and from house to house; his settled resolution of serving the Lord faithfully, even to the end, and even of facrificing his life with joy for the fake of the gospel. We see there also, the grave and affecting exhortations which he made to the ministers of Ephefus, and the ardent and tender wishes by which he recommends them to God, and the whole church over which they were appointed. From hence the ministers of the gospel may learn faithfully to discharge their office, and to fulfil the duties of it with diligence, zeal, and fincerity; to watch carefully over the Lord's flock, and to take heed that no false or offensive doctrines slide in among them; never to conceal any thing that may be of use to those who are committed to their trust; to warn them, not only publickly, but privately also; to R 4 fuffer

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fuffer patiently the troubles to which they are ex. posed; to pray continually for their flocks; and laftly, to have no regard nor value for themselves. their own interests, nor even their lives, provided they may have the fatisfaction of finishing their course, and faithfully discharging the ministry which they have received from the Lord Jesus. What St Paul fays on this occasion teaches Christians, that the office of paftor is of the greatest importance; that God is very gracious to us when he fends us faithful ministers; and that when they have warned and instructed us with fidelity, they will not be answerable for our souls if we do not do our duty, The tears which the pastors and Christians of Epbe. fus shed at parting with St Paul, prove how dearly they loved him; and is likewife an argument how strong that love ought to be that unites the pastors to their flocks, and how much Christians should dread to be deprived of the ministry of the faithful fervants of God.

### CHAP. XXI.

ST Paul departing from Miletus arrives at Tyre, and from thence goes to Cesarea, where he is warned by a prophet that he should be imprisoned at Jerusalem, and delivered over to the Gentiles. This prediction did not affright St Paul, who declared, that he neither feared bonds nor even death; and so he set forwards for Jerusalem. When he was arrived there, he entered into the temple with four other persons who had a vow upon them, to observe what was ordered by the law of Moses in the like case. Though he did this by the advice of the other aposses, to shew that he was not an enemy to the law, as he had been accused; the Jews did nevertheless raise a turnult against him, and would have put him

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I. THE prediction of Agabus, who warned St Paul that he should be cast into prison at Jerusalem, shews, that nothing befel that apostle but by the special will of God; and that it was the Lord who exposed him to those persecutions, and who thought fit that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and afterwards carried to Rome, that he might bear witness to the gospel every where. The noble resolution and constancy which St Paul expressed, when the disciples besought him with tears not to go up to Jerusalem, declaring, that he was ready not only to be bound, but to fuffer death for the name of the Lord Jesus, shews, that this faithful servant of God was entirely devoted to Christ. and that nothing was capable of shaking his conflancy. This is an example that ought to be imitated by all Christians, but particularly by the ministers of the gospel: And, as the Christians of Cefarea, when they faw St Paul was determined to go, no longer opposed his journey, but refigned to the will of God; we ought also to submit to what God has determined, and to facrifice our dearest inclinations to his will, as foon as it is manifested to us. What St Paul did, when he went to the temple of Jerusalem and purified himself, according to the cultom of the Jews, must be looked upon as an act of prudence and charity; and which tended to prove, that he was unjustly accused of being an enemy to the law of Moses. This prudent behaviour of St Paul, teaches us to accommodate ourselves as much as we can, and to comply in indifferent matters with those who are prejudiced against us, and to neglect nothing to bring them off from their wrong notions.

notions. We find, however, that notwithstanding what St Paul did to comply with the Jews, they rose up against him to take away his life. These are the common effects of passion and prejudice; they so blind men, that nothing can undeceive them. Lastly, It is to be observed, that providence delivered St Paul from the rage of the Jews, by means of the tribune, making use of what this apostle had done in compliance with the Jews, to cause him to be seized and delivered by that very people into the hands of the Gentiles, as had been foretold. Thus God secures those that serve him, and all that men do against them tends only to accomplish the ends of providence.

# CHAP. XXII.

I. THIS is a discourse in which St Paul, to justify himself from the accusation of the Jews, that he was an enemy to their law and nation, gives the history of his life and conversion. II. But the Jews insisting upon his being put to death, the captain ordered he should be examined by scourging; which, however, was not done, because this apostle declared that he was a citizen of Rome; but he was sent back, that he might appear before the council of the Jews.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE design of St Paul's discourse, which is here set down, was to shew the Jews he was no enemy to their religion; that, so far from it, he himself had been very zealous for that religion, in which he was brought up at Jerusalem; and was formerly a most violent persecutor of the Christians; that the reason why he had embraced the Christian religion, and preached it every where, was in obedience

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dience to the heavenly call. In this behaviour of St Paul towards the Jews, we may observe, that he endeavoured both to justify himself, and to pacify them, but that he did not, however, diffemble the truth. This teaches us to speak, and act always with temper and prudence, especially when we have to do with persons prejudiced against us; and, at the same time, with courage and resolution, without disguise, and without diffembling the truth through fear. The rage the Jews were in when St Paul faid, that the Lord had dent him to the Gentiles, shews, that the chief cause of their hatred against this apostle, was the aversion they had to the Heathens. This proceedure of the Jews shews likewise, that nothing can undeceive people who labour under strong prejudices. Lastly, St Paul, when they were going to examine him by fcourging, thought fit, in order to avoid it at this time, to plead his privilege as a citizen of Rome, which he had neglected to do on another occasion. He acted thus, because it was a lawful means of fecuring himself against their violent and unjust treatment. From whence we may conclude, that it is lawful to make use of our right, and to employ all just and reasonable methods to defend ourselves, when we are in danger of being oppressed, or unjustly treated.

### CHAP. XXIII.

THIS chapter consists of two parts: I. StPaul's appearing before the council of the Jews. II. The relation of a conspiracy, which forty Jews had formed to take away this apostle's life, and the manner in which he was preserved.

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### REFLECTIONS.

WE may make four reflections upon this chapter : I. That St. Paul, being unjustly struck, by the order of the high priest Anamas, threaten. ed him with the judgment of God; but that he, nevertheless, declared the respect he bore to his character, when he was acquainted that he who had caused him to be thus ftruck was the high prieft; which he did not know at first. What we are to learn from hence is, that we ought to speak respectfully of our superiors; and, at the same time, that God will punish unjust judges, and such as abuse their authority. II. That St Paul occasioned a division between the Pharifees and Sadducees, by faying, that he was arraigned for believing the refurrection of the dead. He acted wifely, in preventing, by this means, being oppressed by the Jews, and shewing that he taught what the Pharifees themselves believed concerning the refurrection. III. That God appeared to St Paul by night, and bid him fear nothing, but to be prepared to go and bear witness to the truth at Rome. This was necessary for the support of the apostle, in the midst of those troubles which the Jews raised against him, to instruct him in the defigns of providence, and to encourage him to make every where an open profession of the truth. IV. We see, in the last place, that forty Jews having conspired to flay St Paul, he was preserved from that danger by a young man, his nephew, who gave the captain notice of it. We may observe from this, how great the rage of the Jews was against St Paul; to what excesses hatred, joined with a false zeal for religion, is capable of hurrying men, and how dangerous it is to be hurried away by passion, and to make rash vows. Finally, we should admire, in this event, the means that providence uses to preferve

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### CHAP. XXIV.

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I S T Paul being accused by the Jews before the governor Felix, gives an account of his behaviour and his faith. II. Felix desiring to hear St Paul, that apostle discoursed of the duties of justice, of temperance, and of the last judgment, in such a manner as filled him with terror. However, St Paul remained a prisoner at Cesarea for the space of two years.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I.WHAT we are to consider first upon this chapter, is, that St Paul being very unjustly accused by the Jews, before the governor Felix, defended himself in a grave, solid discourse; in which, whilft he justifies himself from the accusations brought against him, and denies those things which the Jews falfly laid to his charge, he does, nevertheless, make an open confession of the faith and doctrine which he taught. We may learn from this instance of fincerity and zeal, that neither fear, nor any other confideration, ought to hinder us from afferting the truth. II. It is observable, that the spostle, giving an account of his faith and behaviour, declares he believed and taught nothing but what was written in the law and the prophets, and particularly the refurrection of the dead, of the just and of the unjust. By what St Paul says on this subject, we see, that the doctrine of the resurrection is a very important part of the Christian religion; and, that those who profess to believe it, ought to live a holy and unblameable life, having a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men. We should.

should, in the last place, seriously take notice of the terror with which Felix was seized, when St Paul talked to him about righteousness, temperance, and the last judgment; of that governor's obduracy, who, finding his own conscience reproach him with injuffice, impurity, and feveral other crimes, would not suffer the apostle to proceed. Here we see the power of the word of God, and the effects which the truth of the gospel, and especially the doctrine of the universal judgment, produce, even upon the minds of the wicked. But we likewise observe, how finners refult that word, and the motions of their own conscience. This should therefore be a warning to us not to harden our hearts, nor ever to delay our conversion, when God causes us to hear his voice, and when we feel ourselves affected with it. The wickedness of Felix appeared yet farther, in his leaving St Paul imprisoned two years, not that he thought him guilty, but because he was covetous, and hoped to extort money from him. Thus avarice, and respect for men, are the causes of great injustice, and hinder men from attaining the knowledge of the truth.

### CHAP. XXV.

I. THE Jews desire Festus, who succeeded Felix in the government of Judea, to send St Paul from Cesarea, where he had been a prisoner two years, to Jerusalem; having formed a design to kill him on the way; but Festus did not grant them their request, telling them, they might come to Cesarea, which they did. Upon this, St Paul appealed to the emperor, and Festus resolved to send him to Rome. II. About this time king Agrippa coming to Cesarea, and being told of St Paul, was desirous to see and hear him.

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HE reflections to be made on this chapter are, I. That the Jews having treacherously contrived to kill St Paul, God did not fuffer them to execute their wicked and cruel defign; which should lead us to acknowledge the protection which God affords his faithful servants. II. That St Paul, being accused by the Jews before Festus, continued to maintain his innocence, and at last, desired his cause might be referred to the emperor. This proceedure of the apostle shews, that when we are unjustly accused, we may have recourse to courts of justice, and make use of all the lawful means for our defence which providence puts in our power. III. It must be likewise considered, that providence did thus dispose matters, not only that St Paul might not fall into the hands of the Jews, but also that he might thereby have an opportunity of going to Rome, and of preaching the gospel in that great city, as our Lord had foretold he should. IV. The behaviour of Festus towards St Paul, shews, that that governor, though a heathen, had more integrity and equity than the Jews, and even than the high priefts and magistrates of Jerusalem themselves. Lastly, It is to be observed, that king Agrippa coming at that time to Cefarea, was defirous to fee and hear Paul, and that this was an occasion with which providence furnished this apothe to speak in the presence of that prince, and a great number of people of the first rank; which turned to the justification of St Paul, and the doctrine he preached, as we see in the following chapter.

### CHAP. XXVI.

ST Paul speaking in the presence of king Agrippa, of Bernice, of the governor Festus, and a great 91000 211

great number of officers, and people of distinction, gives the history of his life, conversion, and manner of exercising his ministry, to that time. II. He was interrupted by Festus, who took him for a madman, and by king Agrippas who was moved by his discourse. III. Finally, this prince, the governor, and all that were present, acknowledged the innocence of St Paul; but it was resolved that he should be sent to Rome, because he had appealed to the emperor.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. IN the discourse St Paul made before king Agrippa, to give an account of his conduct, both before and after his conversion, we discover a character of wisdom, of moderation, and, at the same time, of ingenuity, steadiness, and courage, which very plainly denote the innocence and zeal of this apostle. The mild and respectful, but, at the same time, frank and fincere manner, in which he spoke upon this occasion, should teach us to answer always, as we are exhorted by St Peter, with meekness and humility, those who require an account of our faith, and of the hope which is in us, and never to conceal nor diffemble the truth. II. We are to confider upon this discourse, that if St Paul persecuted the church before his conversion, he did it in ignorance and unbelief, but that, otherwise, his life was irreproachable; and, that after the Lord had called him, he ferved him with great zeal. What we are to learn from hence is, that fins of ignorance are more eafily pardoned than others, and that we are, likewife, more easily reclaimed from them; that God reveals himself, sooner or later, to such as are of an upright heart; and that, whenever he calls us, we ought to obey, and follow that call immediately. III. We fee by the judgment Festus made of St Paul, taking

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### CHAP. XXVII.

THIS chapter contains a relation of the voyage which St Paul made by fea from Cefarea to Rome, where what is chiefly to be observed, is, that he was in danger of perishing, the ship in which he was having run a-ground.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS history presents us with four remarks: I. The first relates to the continual danger St Paul was exposed to. After having escaped the rage of the Jews, he had like to have been cast away in his voyage to Rome, and besides, to be murdered by the foldiers. II. The fecond is, that God, who had protected him till then, was pleased to deliver him from both these dangers. We see, therefore, that nothing can hurt those whom God favours with his protection, and who ferve him faithfully. III. The third, that God did not only fave the life of St Paul, but, for his fake, preserved all those that were in the ship with him; so that when they were ship. wrecked, there was not one loft. This wonderful deliverance, which St Paul foretold, must needs convince them, that this apostle was a true servant of God; and it is a leffon to us, that it is always a great happiness to be in the company of good men; and that, upon their account, God often spares the rell, granting them deliverance, and shewing them great favour. IV. It is to be observed, in the last place, that though God had affured St Paul by an angel that none of those who were in the ship with him should perish, yet that apostle declared, that if the mariners did not remain in the veffel, they could no be faved. The promifes which God makes us should not hinder us from using those means that pru

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prudence directs, and which he himself has established; wherefore our reliance upon God ought never to be attended with rashness or negligence.

### CHAP. XXVIII.

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I. S T Paul having been shipwrecked upon the coast of the isle of Maltha, staid there three months, and wrought sundry miracles. II. He departs from Maltha, and arrives at Rome.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE humanity with which the inhabitants of Maltha received St Paul, and those which were shipwrecked with him, should teach Christians to exercise hospitality, and heartily to assist those that are in diffress. The judgment which the people of that island passed upon St Paul, when he was bit by a viper, shews, that men, even the most rude and uncultivated, have always thought that divine vengeance does not fuffer crimes to go unpunished, which is a most certain truth; however, the example of St Paul proves, that it would be judging rashly, to imagine that all those whom any misfortune befals, are purfued by the justice of God. The opinion which the inhabitants of Maltha conceived of St Paul, taking him for a God, when they faw he was not hurt, must be looked upon as an effect of the ignorance of those idolatrous people; but this miracle, as well as that of curing the father-in-law of Publius, and other distempered persons of that island, oblige us to acknowledge the accomplishment of that promife which Christ made his apostles in the with chapter and 18th verse of the gospel of St Mark: They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not burt them; they shall by bands on the fick, and they shall recover. Lastly,

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St

St Paul being arrived at Rome, faw not only the Christians that were in that great city, but likewife the Jews, whom he informed of the reasons that induced him to take a voyage to Rome, and to appeal to the emperor; he spoke of their nation, and of the Jews at Ferusalem, with great temper, and afterwards endeavoured to bring them to believe in Jesus Chrift; and finding; at last, that several among them continued in their unbelief, he declared to them, that because of their obdurateness, he would preach the gospel to the Gentiles. This his behaviour, full of wisdom and charity, shews, that we ought to omit nothing that may edify the world, or bring back those who are prejudiced against the truth; and that, if then people will continue obstinate, they are inexcufable.

Thus ends the history of St Luke; and the book of the Acts of the apostles. It may be farther observed, that St Paul remained a prisoner at Rome two years; that, during that time, he wrote several epistles, which have been preserved in the new testament; that he was afterwards set at liberty, and made several journies; and that, returning to Rome about five years after, he there suffered martyrdom, being beheaded in the reign of Nero.

The End of the Acts of the Apostles.

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# ROMANS.

# ARGUMENT.

The epiftle to the Romans was wrote about the fifty seventh year of our Lord. It was placed at the head of the other epiftles, because of the importance of the matters contained in it, and the dignity of the city of Rome. The design of this epistle is to shew, that faith in Christ, through the Gospel, is the only way of salvation; and, that circumcifion, and the works of the law of Moses, gave the Jews no advantage over the Gentiles; and, therefore, that the Gentiles, who embraced the Gospel, were not to be obliged to submit to circumcission, and the ceremonies of the law, as certain Jews converted to Christianity pretended; and, that God might call the Gentiles, and receive them into his covenant, as the prophets had foretold. This is what we are taught in the eleven first chapters of this epiftle. In the five last, St Paul exhorts the Romans to the principal duties of the Christian life, and especially to charity, forbearance, and peace; forasmuch as the divisions which prevailed at that time, between the Jews and the converted. Gentiles, troubled the peace of the church.

### CHAP. I.

N this chapter St *Paul* does two things: I. He falutes the believers at *Rome*, and expresses his joy at hearing of their faith, and the great desire S<sub>3</sub>

he had to go and fee them. II. He begins to shew, that as all men were sinners, they could be faved only by Jesus Christ; and for that purpose he makes appear, that though God had discovered himself to the Gentiles, by the works of the creation, they did not serve him, but fell into idolatry, and all kinds of disorders.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE observe, at the beginning of this epistle, the love of St Paul to the Romans, his defire to contribute to their edification, and his zeal to make known the gospel in all places, and to all perfons, and even in the city of Rome. All Christians, and particularly ministers of the gospel, ought to imitate St Paul in this respect; to love tenderly the church of Christ, and the faithful; to pray continually for them; to procure their edification with all their might, and never to be ashamed of truth or godliness. II. We see, that although God manitested himself to the Gentiles by the works of creation, and providence, they did not glorify him, but abandoned themselves to fins of every kind; and, that even those nations where arts and sciences flourished, fell into the most shameful idolatry, and most unworthy of reasonable creatutes, and thereby provoked God's wrath against them. If the Gentiles were guilty before God, and inexcufable for these things, as St Paul declares, how guilty should we be, if, after God has made known himself to us, not only by the works of nature, but by his word, we did not ferve him as we ought. III. What the apostle fays in this chapter, with respect to the two principal fins of the Gentiles, which were idolatry, and the dreadful disorders which they fell into with respect to uncleanness, shews us what condition we should be in, if God had not enlightened us with the light

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with we the ight light of the gospel, and into what horrid actions fensuality and uncleanness may lead mankind. IV. Finally, in the last verses of this chapter, St Paul describes the vices of the heathen, saying, that they were filled with pollutions, covetousness, injustice, and passions and sins of every kind; and, that although they knew that those who did such things were worthy of death, they did not forbear committing them. We must own, to our shame, that this is the picture of the lives and manners of a great number of Christians; but, it likewise teaches us, that they who thus imitate the heathens in their disorders, who know, much better than they the law of God and his will, must expect the severest judgments.

### CHAP. II.

I. C T Paul having shewn, in the foregoing chapter, that the Gentiles were finners, proves in this, that the Jews, who condemned the Gentiles, were finners also; and, by abusing the light they enjoyed, and the goodness of God, they would appear much more guilty before his tribunal than the Gentiles, who knew no other law but that of nature and conscience. Whence it follows, that the Jews could not pretend to be justified before God by their works, and, that they had no more right to falvation than the Gentiles. II. And because the Jews gloried in having the law of God, and circumcifion, which was the token of the covenant; the apostle declares, that all these external advantages, which diftinguished them from the Gentiles, did not render them more acceptable to God, but were useless to them, whilst they neglected to keep the law.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE defign of this chapter in general, is to shew that the Jews were guilty before God, as much, and even more than the Gentiles; and, confequently, that they could not be justified nor faved but by Jesus Christ. Besides which, we may gather from this chapter the following instructions: I. That those who condemn sin in others, and do, nevertheless, commit the like, will be inexcusable, and shall not escape the judgment of God. II. That God uses great forbearance towards sinners, in order to bring them to repentance; and, that those who abuse such forbearance, draw upon themselves the most terrible effects of his wrath. III. That God will one day render to all men according to their works; that he will give everlasting life to those who have persevered in well doing; but, that affliction and despair will be the portion of the wicked. IV. That, at the day of judgment, men will be judged according to the degree of knowledge which they have had; that the Gentiles will be judged by the law of nature; but, that the punishment of those, who shall fin against the law that God has given them in his word, will be much more rigorous; by which we may fee what Christians are to expect, who fin against the light of the gospel. V. And laftly, St Paul proves, that the Jews in vain gloried in being more enlightened than the Gentiles, and having the fign of circumcifion. He reproaches them with transgressing the law of God in a more criminal manner than the Gentiles themselves, and causing them to blaspheme the name of God; whence he concludes, that circumcifion, and other privileges which they enjoyed, were of no use to them, and that they would be treated as Gentiles and uncircumcifed. What St Paul fays with fo much evidence a-

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gainst the Jews, teaches us, that we ought not to boast of knowing the will of God, of being in covenant with him, and of having the external tokens of his covenant, unless we do his will; that he is not a true Christian, who is only so outwardly; but, that he shall be esteemed a Christian, who is so inwardly, and in the heart, and who is approved, not by men, but by the Lord himself.

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### CHAP. III.

CT Paul shews three things in this chapter: I. That the Jews had great advantages over the Gentiles; that if they did not believe in Jesus Christ, this did not hinder God from being always true in his promifes, nor them from being justly punished; and, that though the unbelief of the Jews served to manifest the righteousness, truth, and goodness of God, yet they would, nevertheless, be wholly inexcusable. II. St Paul proves, by several texts of the old testament, that the Jews were guilty of the violation of the law of God; and he takes notice, that those texts did only relate to the Jews. III. He concludes from thence, that the Jews could not have been justified by the law of Moses, and that neither they nor the Gentiles could be justified any other way than by faith in Jesus Christ; and he says, that this doctrine was fo far from being opposite to the law, that, on the contrary, it established it more strongly.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE doctrine which St Paul teaches throughout this chapter, and which he defigns to prove, is, that fince the Jews were involved in fin and guilt as well as the Gentiles, they could not pretend to be justified by the law of Moses, and that there was

was but one only means of justification for both, viz. faith in Jesus Christ, who has made an atonement for the fins of all mankind. Besides this doctrine, which is the foundation and fum of the whole Chriftian religion, there are three particular remarks to be made upon this chapter: I. That as the privileges which the Jews enjoyed were of no benefit to them, by reason of their unbelief, so, likewise, the advantages which God has granted to us Christians, will be useless to us, if we abuse them, and will not fecure us from his judgment. II. That the infidelity and ingratitude of men, do not make God unrighteous when he punishes them; that such infidelity does even help to shew, that God is righteous, good, and true; but that, nevertheless, we must not think that God cannot condemn finners with justice, because fin ferves to manifest his glory; for the glory of God is only accidentally the effect of fin; the aim and defign of the wicked is not to advance God's glory, but to fatisfy their passions. What the apostle fays upon this occasion, proves likewise, that we must never do evil under a pretence that good may III. And laftly, It appears by the laft verfes of this chapter, that the intention of St Paul, in what he here teaches, was not to abolish the law, or to render it useless; nor ought we from thence to infer, that Christians are allowed to break the law, and to continue in fin; but, on the contrary, that the doctrine of justification by faith is, at the bottom, the same with that of the law and the prophets; and, that this doctrine is fo far from dispensing with the duties of holiness, that it leads men more effectually to the practice of them, as is shewn by the apostle in the following chapters.

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I. THE apostle proves, in this chapter, by the example of the patriarch Abraham, that men are justified by faith, and not by circumcision, nor by the works of the law of Moses. Accordingly he observes, that justification consists in the pardon of sin, and that Abraham himself was justified by his faith, and that he received the promises of God long before he was circumcised. II. He represents, in the next place, what was the virtue and efficacy of Abraham's faith; and concludes, that all who believe in Jesus Christ dead, and risen again, should be justified by faith, as Abraham was.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ST Paul teaches us, in this chapter, in the clearest manner, what justification is, and how we may partake of it. I. He shews, that justification, and the happiness of finful man, consists in the pardon of fin, which God grants to mankind in his pure mercy; and affirms, that this favour is obtained by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law of This he proves clearly, by observing, that Abraham was justified by his faith, and the promises were made to his posterity long before he was circumcifed. From whence it evidently follows, that it was not the circumcifion, but faith, that rendered him acceptable to God; that therefore circumcifion was not necessary to falvation; and all those who imitate the faith of this patriarch, will be accounted his children and posterity, and justified as he was. But the manner in which the apostle speaks of the faith of Abraham, and its effects, is an invincible proof, that it is impossible to be justified, and obtain falvation, if our faith be not like that of Abraham's, and

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our faith in God and his promises be not efficacious and active, inducing us to expect every thing from him, to hope in his promises, and obey him even in the most disticult matters, as did this holy patriarch. This is a most important doctrine, which we ought to comprehend well, and carefully remember, and which should serve for a rule to our thoughts, and to our actions.

### CHAP. V.

HIS chapter confifts of three parts: I. St Paul describes the fruits of justification, and the admirable effects which faith, and a conviction of the love of God, produceth in believers, even in the midst of afflictions and perfecutions. II. He reprefents the great love of God to men, in giving his Son to die for them. III. He shews, that Christ alone is the fountain of all these precious advantages; in which view, he compares Christ with Adam, and shews, that if Adam had subjected all men, without exception, to fin and to death, even those that lived before Moses, and to whom God had not given a positive and revealed law, as he did to Adam; much more ought we to believe, that the mercy of God should extend to all mankind by Jesus Christ; from whence he concludes, that our Lord is the author of falvation, and of life, to all fuch as truly believe in him.

# REFLECTIONS.

E may observe, by the reading of this chapter, I. The happy condition of true believers, since being justified by faith, they are so firmly persuaded, and have so agreeable and lively a sense of the love of God, that they rejoice continually in the expectation of the glory of heaven, even in the midst

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of their greatest tribulations. II. We ought seriously to meditate upon what is here faid concerning the great love that God has shewn to us sinful men, by delivering up his Son to die for us, and particularly his love to those that are reconciled to him, and fincerely believe the gospel. This consideration is a powerful motive to gratitude, full of comfort to believers, and very proper to confirm them in his love. III. The comparison St Paul makes in this chapter, between Adam and CHRIST, tends to shew, that our Lord came to deliver man from sin and death, to which they all became subject by the fall of Adam. This ought to make us look upon Chrift, as him in whom we find a deliverance from all our evils, and who is the giver of spiritual and eternal life to all fuch as believe in him, and obey But it likewise appears from hence, that none but those who have a share in the righteousness and life of Christ, can obtain salvation; and, that such as do not receive him with a true faith, and who imitate Adam in his disobedience, remain in condemnation and in death.

# CHAP. VI.

THE design of St Paul in this chapter is to shew, I. That the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and of the abundant grace of God to the greatest sinners, which he has taught in the foregoing chapters, does by no means authorize Christians to live in sin, but, on the contrary, does powerfully draw them from it; and, that baptism engages them to live a holy life. II. He shews in the same view, that we ought to be so far from sinning, upon a pretence that we are no longer under the law, but under grace, that it is grace which delivers us from the slavery and bondage of sin, to make

us the fervants of God, that is, to dedicate ourselves wholly to his service.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE ought feriously to meditate on the doctrine St Paul here teaches us; it amounts to this: I. That we should not think, that because the grace of God is offered to men of corrupt lives, we are allowed to live in fin. II. That, far from it, the baptism which we have received, and the belief in Christ's death and refurrection, oblige us in the strongest manner to renounce sin, and to lead a spiritual life, in imitation of that of our Saviour. That it would be a thing highly unworthy of our calling, and of the condition of Christians, if fin should reign in us, and if we should suffer ourselves to be carried away by the inordinate defires of the flesh. But, that we ought much rather to cleave to God, live only for him, and employ our bodies and fouls in his fervice, and to his glory. IV. That it would be an abuse of the doctrine of grace, and a great affront to Christ and his gospel, to fancy that we may fin without fear, upon a pretence that we are no longer under the law but under grace; that, on the contrary, the effect which grace ought to produce, and the defign for which it is given us, is to release us from the shameful bondage of sin, and to make us fubmit ourselves to God and his righteousness, and cause us to bring forth the fruits of fanctification, to the end that we may obtain everlafting These are truths of very great weight, and the chapter in which they are contained ought to be read and meditated carefully on.

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THE apostle having taught, in the preceeding chapter, that we must not think that Christians are allowed to live in fin, on pretence that they are not under the law, but under grace, confirms the faid doctrine in this chapter, and shews, I. That as a woman is at liberty to marry again when her hufband is dead, fo Christians may forfake the law of Moses, to cleave to that of Jesus Christ, and that they were delivered from the law of Moses, that they might be subject to Christ, who calls them, and fashions them to true holiness. II. He shews next, that this change was very advantageous to them, fince they were thereby in a condition to produce the fruits of holiness, and to serve God with a new III. That he might the better explain his foirit. thoughts, he fays, that the law was holy and good; that it was not the cause of fin; but, that it had not the same efficacy as the gospel, to fanctify men, and to free them from corruption. It is in this view, that the apostle represents, in his own person, the state of a man that lives under the law, and who is in fubjection to fin and death; and he renders thanks to God, for having delivered him from that condition, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# REFLECTIONS.

THIS is a chapter which ought to be well underflood, and which must not be misapplied. The
design of St Paul is, to teach that the doctrine of
grace tends to sanctify men, as he had determined
in the preceeding chapter. Thus when he makes
mention of a carnal man sold to sin, in whom there
is no good, who is a slave to the law of sin, who
does not do the good which he approves, but who

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commits the evil he disapproves; it must not be thought that he intended to, describe the condition of a regenerate man, and of a Christian, that partakes of the spirit of Jesus Christ; for the apostle says, in this very chapter, that Christians are delivered from this state of fin and condemnation, to bear fruit unto God, and serve him with a new heart; and we are taught in the following chapter, that believers are no longer under the bondage of the flesh and of fin, but that they have been fet free from them by Jesus Christ our Lord. But St Paul designed to represent, in his own person, in a figurative way of fpeaking, very usual with him, the condition of a man who is under the law; and who, not having faith and the spirit of Christ, is a slave to his passions. The doctrine of the apostle, therefore, amounts to this: That the law had not the same efficacy as the gospel, to deliver men from their corruption, and to fanctify them; and, therefore, that the doctrine of justification by faith, very far from indulging men in the liberty of finning, tends to render them holy; and to free them from the flavery of their paffions. From whence it follows, that those who are still engaged in this flavery, and in whom the defires of the flesh prevail, have not a true faith, and belong not to Jesus Christ.

### CHAP. VIII.

I. S T Paul goes on to shew, that Christians are no longer subject to condemnation and to sin, like those who are under the law; and, that they do not govern themselves by the motions of the slesh, but by those of the spirit of God; whence he concludes, that believers were under an indispensible obligation to live, not according to the slesh, but according to the spirit, and to behave themselves as the

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the children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. II. And because it might be imagined Christians were not reconciled with God, fince they are exposed to persecutions, the apostle proves, that these perfecutions hinder them not from partaking of the love of God. This is what he means, when he fays, that all creatures, that is, all the faithful, underwent great evils; but that, however, they waited with a firm hope for the manifestation of the glory of the children of God. III. St Paul adds, that God supported them by his spirit in the midst of their distresses, that he heard their prayers, and that their afflictions were so far from being hurtful to them, that they contributed to their happiness, since God had decreed that the faithful should arrive at glory through sufferings, after the example of Jesus Christ. IV. From all this the apostle infers, that the happiness of God's elect is certain; and that God having given them his own Son, who died, and intercedes for them in heaven, no creature nor any evil can hinder them from attaining everlasting happiness.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE instructions which the first part of this chapter affords us are, I. That the condition of true believers is very happy, since there is no more condemnation for them, and since they are delivered from sin and death, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the power of his spirit, II. That the true and surest token by which we may discover those that belong to Christ, is, that they do not live according to the sless, but mortify the lusts thereof; that they set their hearts upon spiritual things, and sollow the motions of the spirit of God a their whole behaviour. III. That Christians therefore ought to study to live a holy life; that You, III.

commits the evil he disapproves; it must not be thought that he intended to describe the condition of a regenerate man, and of a Christian, that partakes of the spirit of Jesus Christ; for the apostle says, in this very chapter, that Christians are delivered from this state of fin and condemnation, to bear fruit unto God, and ferve him with a new heart; and we are taught in the following chapter, that believers are no longer under the bondage of the flesh and of fing but that they have been fet free from them by Jesus Christ our Lord. But St Paul designed to represent, in his own person, in a figurative way of fpeaking, very usual with him, the condition of a man who is under the law; and who, not having faith and the spirit of Christ, is a slave to his passions. The doctrine of the apostle, therefore, amounts to this: That the law had not the same efficacy as the gospel, to deliver men from their corruption, and to fanctify them; and, therefore, that the doctrine of justification by faith, very far from indulging men in the liberty of finning, tends to render them holy, and to free them from the flavery of their paffions. From whence it follows, that those who are still engaged in this flavery, and in whom the defires of the flesh prevail, have not a true faith, and belong not to Jesus Christ. on Iclus Chalt

### CHAP. VIII.

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the children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. II. And because it might be imagined Christians were not reconciled with God, fince they are exposed to persecutions, the apostle proves, that these persecutions hinder them not from partaking of the love of God. This is what he means, when he fays, that all creatures, that is, all the faithful, underwent great evils; but that, however, they waited with a firm hope for the manifestation of the glory of the children of God. III. St Paul adds, that God supported them by his spirit in the midst of their diffresses, that he heard their prayers, and that their afflictions were to far from being hurtful to them, that they contributed to their happiness, since God had decreed that the faithful should arrive at glory through sufferings, after the example of Jesus Christ. IV. From all this the apostle infers, that the happiness of God's elect is certain; and that God having given them his own Son, who died, and intercedes for them in heaven, no creature nor any evil can hinder them from attaining everlasting happiness.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE instructions which the first part of this chapter affords us are, I. That the condition of true believers is very happy, since there is no more condemnation for them, and since they are delivered from sin and death, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the power of his spirit, II. That the true and surest token by which we may discover those that belong to Christ, is, that they do not live according to the sless, but mortify the lusts thereof; that they set their hearts upon spiritual things, and sollow the motions of the spirit of God a their whole behaviour. III. That Christians therefore ought to study to live a holy life; that Vol. III.

those who live in fin have not the spirit of Christ. nor can they please God, but are in a state of condemnation and death; whereas those who labour to mortify the deeds of the body, do partake of the fpiritual life, and of the inheritance which God referves for all his children. The fecond part of this chapter teaches us, I. That the troubles and afflictions of this life, are not to be compared with the joys of heaven, and are so far from being obstacles to the happiness of God's children, that they rather promote it; and that in general all things work together for good to those that love God. Il. That the faithful, and those that God loves most, do figh and groan, in expectation of this great glory which God has referved for them, and are fometimes exposed to the feverest trials; but that God supports and comforts them in their conflicts by his spirit, and even makes use of afflictions to lead them to glory, and make them conformable to Jesus III. The apostle tells us, that God will infallibly glorify all the elect; that having given them his Son, he will with him grant them every thing that is necessary; that the death and refurrection of Christ, his ascension into heaven, and his intercession, ought to fill them with a firm trust in the midst of their severest trials, and that there is no creature, in heaven or earth, that can feparate them from the love of God. These considerations tend very much to the comfort of the true children of God, and are very proper to support them in their afflictions, to fill them with joy, hope, and confidence, and to confirm them more and more in the love of God and true holiness.

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#### CHAP. IX.

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OT Paul having taught, that the Gentiles would partake of the grace of God as well as the Jews, an objection feemed to follow from this doctrine, viz. That the Jews, who were the chosen people of God, were excluded from the promises, while the Gentiles, who descended not from Abrabam, were made the people of God: This objection he answers, I. By expressing his tender regard for the Jews, which was fo great, that he was willing to devote himself to death, and to be used like the worst of men, if that might contribute to their falvation. II. He shews next, by the example of Isaac, whom God preferred to Ishmael, who was also the son of Abraham; and by the example of Jacob, who was chosen before Esau, although both had the same father and mother, and were twins, that all those who are descended from Abraham, are not considered as his posterity, nor comprehended in the divine covenant. III. St Paul lays down farther, that God may admit into his covenant, and choose for falvation, those whom he thinks fit; and that men have no reason to complain, because he does nothing, even with the wicked, but with justice and goodness; bearing long with them, and rejecting them only because of their unbelief. IV. Lastly, He concludes from what he had faid, that God might call the Gentiles to falvation; which he confirms by the prophets, who had plainly foretold the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE abstract and substance of this chapter is, that God, who is the Lord of all things, and

who is perfectly just and supremely good, may im. part his favours to whom he pleases, and that men have no reason to complain; that accordingly, he might decree falvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and even justly reject the Jews because of their unbelief, as the prophets expressly foretold. This doctrine obliges us to praise the mercy of the Lord, who has vouchfafed to call us to his covenant, who were originally Gentiles; and to acknowledge, that if we be chosen for salvation, it is wholly owing to the favour of God. We are to confider, in the next place, that as all those who descended from Abraham did not partake of the promises of God; and that even the Jews, to whom these promises were made, have been cast off by reason of their unbelief, notwithstanding the privileges of their calling; fo the advantages of the divine covenant will become useless to us, if we do not make fuitable returns to the goodness which God has shewn us, and if we exclude ourselves from falvation by our ingratitude and unbelief.

## CHAP. X.

I. CT Paul continues to treat of the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles; he expresses a tender regard for the Jews, bearing them witness that most of them had a zeal for God; but they had rejected the gospel, because they placed their righteousness in the law of Moses, not observing that that law led them to Jesus Christ. II. He shews next by the words of Moses, that faith is a much more easy means of being justified before God than the law was; and that this means of obtain ing falvation confifts in believing heartily in Jefu Christ, and in making a public profession of his III. He adds, that this falvation wa doctrine.

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offered to all men by the preaching of the gospel; and proves from the prophets, and particularly from Moses and Isaiab, that the Gentiles were to be called, and that the Jews should be rejected, because of their unbelief and hardness of heart.

## REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from hence, I. That there is no other means of attaining to falvation, but that which is offered us in Jesus Christ, and that those who feek for other means cannot be faved. the way which the gospel prescribes for justification, has nothing in it beyond our power, or which is not even very easy; and that therefore we shall be inexcusable if we do not lay hold of so precious an advantage. III. St Paul teaches us in this chapter, that all those shall be faved, who with their heart believe in the Lord Jesus, and confess him with their mouth; which shews, that a sincere faith, and a public profession of the gospel, is absolutely neceffary to falvation. IV. He likewife teaches us, that God has been pleased to offer salvation to all mankind by the gospel; that faith comes by hearing the word of God, and that this word may be heard, there must be persons sent to preach it. This should convince us of the necessity of preaching the gospel, and the value we ought to have for the word of God, and the ministers of the gospel. V. And lastly, We see that the calling of the Gentiles, and the unbelief of the Jews, were expressly foretold. Here we are to confider on one hand, that God forefaw, and, long before it came to pass, foretold what was to happen to the Jews and Gentiles; which invincibly proves, that there is a providence which governs all things, and that the Christian religion is of divine original; and on the other hand, it is a warning to us, that those Christians who obey not the gospel,

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and resist the heavenly call, shall be deprived of salvation as the Jews were, and shall even be more severely punished than they.

#### CHAP. XI.

T Paul having spoken of the rejection of the Jews, alks whether God had wholly cast off his people whom he had chosen; to which he himself answers two things: I. The one is, that all the Jews were not rejected, fince there were feveral of them who had believed in Jesus Christ; as in the time of Elijah, there were in Israel many worshippers of the true God; but that the rest of that nation continued in unbelief, as had been foretold by the prophets. II. The other is, that the Jews were not cast off for ever, but only for a time; and that their fall had given occasion to the calling of the Gentiles; but that they would one day be readmitted into covenant with God. III. After this the apostle exhorts the Gentiles to improve the goodness of God towards them, and his feverity towards the Jews, lest if they should be puffed up with pride, and fall into unbelief like the Jews, they also should be cut off. this end he compares the Gentiles to a wild olive-tree, grafted into the good olive-tree, by which last he represented the Jews. IV. And lastly, He plainly foretels the conversion of the Jews, proving it from the prophets; and concludes this fubject, adoring the wisdom and mercy of God, which appear in his dealings with Jews and Gentiles, and in what is to befal them before the end of the world.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE general reflection on this chapter is, that God had not entirely cast off the Jews, since divers of them did believe the gospel, and the time will

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will come when all that nation will be converted. This proves the veracity of God's promises, and is a very strong confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and of the divine authority of the holy scriptures. To this general consideration we may add the four following particular reflections. I. That as in the time of the apostles, and in the days of Elijah, there were believers among the Jews, God has always some elect in the midst of the greatest depravity. II. St Paul shews the use we should make of the doctrine he has taught in this epiftle concerning the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles; namely, that it ought to inspire us with fentiments of fear, humility and gratitude; us I fay, who are the posterity of the heathens, and induce us to make a right use of the goodness of God, and persevere in faith, lest we lose the title we now have to the grace of God, and eternal life. III. We have here a most remarkable prediction of the conversion of the whole Jewish nation; and of all other nations coming into the church. The divine authority of the scriptures, and the prophecies which have been already accomplished, should convince us of the certainty of this great and happy event. And we plainly fee God intends one day to call the Jews, fince they still subsist, though dispersed throughout the world for so many ages. We cught to expect with faith and joy the accomplishment of this prediction, to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and for the conversion of the Jews, and in the mean time to entertain a tender compassion, and true charity for that people whom God still loves. IV. And lastly, When we consider God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles, and how he proposes to unite them one day in his church, this should stir us up to adore the ways of the Lord, to celebrate his mercy and wisdom, and to say with St Paul, O the T4

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time will the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and know. ledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! — For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: To whom he glory for ever. Amen.

## CHAP. XII.

AFTER St Paul had shewn that the Gentiles were called to salvation by the great mercy of God, the remaining part of this epistle, is taken up in setting forth the duties of the Christian life, and particularly of peace and charity. In this chapter he does three things: I. He exhorts believers to devote themselves to the service of God, and to renounce the world. II. He recommends to Christians, and especially to such as had any office in the church, or any gifts which distinguish them from others, to exercise their callings, and to employ their gifts for the public good. III. He exhorts them above all to charity; he describes the manner of exercising this virtue towards our brethren, and towards those who hate and persecute us.

## REFLECTIONS.

WE may learn in general, from this and the following chapters, in which St Paul, after having treated of justification and the calling of the Gentiles, speaks of the duties of Christian morality; that the design of the gospel is the practice of holiness, and of good works; and that this in particular is the effect which the doctrine of our redemption ought to produce, as well as the consideration of the great mercy that God has manifested to us in his Son. This chapter furnishes us likewise with three particular lessons. I. That true piety and the service which God requires of us, consists in devoting our-felves

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felves entirely to him, in renouncing the world, in not imitating worldly men in their manner of living, and being renewed in our minds by an entire fubmission and conformity to the will of God. II. That being all members of the body of Christ, which is the church, we ought to apply the gifts we have received to the advantage of our brethren; those of us especially, who are called to any office in the church, by discharging it with zeal and integrity. III. That charity is the most important duty, and comprehends all the rest, and particularly the following, which the apostle here sets down; which are, to love one another fincerely; to be ready to do all good offices, to sympathize in the good or evil that befals our brethren; to comfort and affift those that are in affliction, and to live together in a spirit of humility, peace and unity. Charity does yet farther oblige Christians to love and bless those who hate them and injure them, to endeavour to have peace with all men, to abstain from revenge, and to render good for evil. These are the most essential duties of the religion we profess, and we deserve the name of Christians no farther than we fincerely practife them.

## CHAP. XIII.

ST Paul speaks in this chapter, I. Of our duty to the higher powers. II. Of love to our neighbour, which is the sum of the law of God. III. He shews that Christians ought to live in holiness, sobriety and chastity, since God has delivered them from the darkness of ignorance, and enlightened them with the light of the gospel.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE three parts of this chapter afford us these three instructions: I. That kings, princes and magis-

magistrates, are appointed by God; and that it is from him they receive authority to govern the people, and punish those who disturb the peace of the fociety; and that therefore, every one is bound in conscience to submit to the higher powers, to be faithful to them, and to render them all that is due to them. II. That the love of our neighbour is as it were the fum of the whole law, which teaches us, that charity is a very confiderable part of the duty of a Christian; that the true way to fulfil what the law commands, is to have a spirit of peace, meekness and forbearance, and to love our neighbour fincerely. III. St Paul teaches us, that fince the clouds of ignorance, in which men formerly lived, are dispersed by the light of the gospel which now shineth, we ought to avoid fenfuality, diffoluteness, impurity, and all the defires of the flesh, and to live in chastity and temperance, following the example and divine precepts of our great Lord and mafter. And to encourage us to observe these holy laws, let us consider the happy state in which God has placed us; let us always represent to ourselves, that the time of our falvation draws near, that our chief study may be, to partake of it though the mercy of our Lord Jesus Chrift. Amen.

#### CHAP. XIV.

POR the right understanding of this chapter, we must remember, that there were in the time of St Paul certain Christians, who having been Jews and not being sufficiently instructed, scrupled to eat of certain meats, and observed a distinction of days, after the Jewish manner. St Paul shews, I. How those weak persons were to be treated. He says, that we must bear with them, and avoid all disputes

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with them, fince they who had different fentiments did follow each of them the dictates of their own conscience, believing in Christ, and being partakers of his grace. II. To confirm this doctrine, he represents Christians as living only unto the Lord, who alone has an entire authority over them; and therefore, every thing that they do, should be designed for the glory of God, and the edification of others; that no body has a right to condemn others, fince every one is to give an account of himself to God. shews, III. That those who were better instructed in their Christian liberty, ought not to abuse that liberty, nor offend weak people, who made a scruple of eating certain meats. IV. And laftly, he fays, that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of peace and forbearance; that it was a great fin to condemn, discourage, or give cause of offence to our neighbour; but that every one ought to abstain from what he thought unlawful, and even from those things which he is in doubt about, fince every thing that is done without faith, and the approbation of our conscience, finful.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE doctrine St Paul here teaches amounts to this: That Christians are bound to bear with each other; that those who are most enlightened, ought to have the greatest consideration for such as are weak, and less knowing than themselves; that they ought not to despise them, nor do any thing that may grieve or offend them; that we ought even to abstain from things indifferent and lawful, when we foresee they may be an occasion of scandal to others. These are maxims of charity and forbearance, from which we ought never to depart; by the right observation of which, the glory of God, the

peace

peace of the church, and the common falvation, are very much promoted; while disputes and quarrels are extremely prejudicial to the edification of the church, and therefore ought to be avoided as much as possible. Lastly, We should take particular notice of what St Paul lays down in this whole chapter, and particularly at the end of it, viz. That every one should have a great regard to his conscience, and that whatever is not of faith is sin. This teaches us, that those who act against their own conscience, or even those that do a thing without being well affured in their mind that it is lawful, are very guilty before God, even though that thing be in itself innocent; and that, in order to please the Lord, and enjoy peace of confcience, our first care should be to be well instructed in our duty, and then follow the dictates of our conscience, prudently avoiding every thing that may disturb the peace of the church, or give offence to its members.

#### CHAP. XV.

I. THE apostle continues to exhort the Romans to charity and forbearance towards such as are weak in faith, proposing to them, for that purpose, the example of Jesus Christ, and beseeching God to inspire them with sentiments of peace and charity. II. In this view he represents to them, that Christ was sent to unite the Jews and Gentiles in his church, as has been foretold by the prophets; by which he would convince them, that there ought to be no division among them. II. He speaks next of his ministry, and of the plentiful fruits of his preaching among the Gentiles, and in several parts of the world. IV. and lastly, He tells the Romans, that

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that he intended to visit them after he had made a journey to Jerusalem, on account of a collection which was making for the Christians in that city. He then recommends himself to their prayers, and prays like, wise for them.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from this chapter, I. That those who are advanced in knowledge and piety, ought to behave with great condescension and charity to those who are not come up to them, and thereby to imitate the meekness and goodness of our Lord. II. St Paul shews the design of this epistle to the Romans, and the end of his doctrine, faying, that Christ came to save, not only the Jews, but the Gentitles; and to accomplish, by this means, the promiles which God had made to their forefathers by the prophets. This is a truth which we should meditate upon, in order to strengthen our faith, and excite our gratitude towards God. III. We are to consider what St Paul says in this chapter of his travels and labours; of the wonderful fuccess of his ministry, of the many churches which he had founded in several parts of the world, and of his design to go to Rome and other places; all which is a proof of the great zeal of this apostle, his perfect charity, and above all, of the power of God, and the divine efficacy of the gospel, so visible in the miracles St Paul wrought, and the furprifing fuccess of his preaching. This is an example which the ministers of Christ ought to imitate as far as they are able, by labouring incessantly in the establishment of the kingdom of God. IV. and laftly, St Paul's fo earneftly recommending himself to the prayers of the Christians at Rome shews, that the ministers of Christ do

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do greatly stand in need of the prayers of the church, and that one of the chief duties of Christians, is to pray for their spiritual guides; as it is likewise the duty of pastors to offer up continually prayers for their flocks.

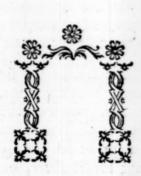
## CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter contains, I. The falutations St Paul fends to several Christians of Rome in his own name, and in the name of the ministers of Christ, and the believers that were with him at Corinth. II. Exhortations to beware of those who occasion troubles in the church, and who teach false doctrines. III. His wishes and prayers in behalf of the Romans.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THERE are two things to be observed in the falutations contained in this chapter: The first is, that the gospel had already made a considerable progress at Rome, and that there were in that city a great number of people, who made profession of the Christian religion. The second reflection relates to St Paul's love and charity to the church at Rome, and particularly to the faithful, who are here named. Such is the true spirit of Christianity. Thus do Christians sincerely love one another, are strictly united, and pray for each other, though they be never fo distant; particularly for those who are distinguished by their zeal and piety. II. St Paul directs us next how to behave towards those who teach false doctrines, or cause sects and divisions in the church; that is, to be upon our guard against them, to avoid them, to adhere constantly to the pure doctrine of the gospel, and to the pastors who preach it. III. And lastly, We ought to join our thanks-givings to those of the apostle at the end of this epistle, and to bless God, that he has revealed in Christ Jesus the calling of the Gentiles, and the redemption of mankind, a mystery which, till then, had been kept secret from the soundation of the world; and had made known the gospel to all nations for the obedience of faith. To this great God, only wise, be glory for ever, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

The End of the Epiftle of St PAUL to the ROMANS.



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## FIRST EPISTLE of St PAUL

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TO THE

# CORINTHIANS.

## ARGUMENT.

This epiftle was wrote about the fifty fixth year of Christ. St Paul gives several instructions in it, concerning the defects and disorders in the church of Corinth, particularly the divisions among them; and upon several important articles of religion.

## CHAP. I.

I. HE apostle begins the first chapter with falutations, thanksgivings, and prayers. II. He reproves the Corintbians for the divisions that reigned among them, on account of the ministers who had preached the gospel to them, some of them being for St Peter, others for Apollos, or for himself; whereas, being baptized in the name of Christ, and not in the name of any of the apostles, they ought to look upon themselves as belonging to Christ alone. III. And when several endeavoured to make St Paul despicable, the apostle confesses

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fesses, that his preaching was not attended with worldly wisdom and eloquence; but that he preached after a very plain manner, and suitable to the nature of the gospel, which is the doctrine of the cross: God having thought fit, in his infinite wisdom, to save mankind in a way which appeared weak and foolish to unbelievers, and the wise men of the world, viz. by Christ crucified; and to call to salvation such as were the least considerable among men.

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I. WE may learn from what St Paul fays at the beginning of this epiftle, and the prayers he makes for the Corintbians, that the perfection of Christians consists in being enriched with all forts of spiritual gifts, so as to be found unblameable at the coming of Christ. This is what we ought all to endeavour at, and what we ought to defire for each other. II. St Paul's reproof of the Corinthians for their divifions, teaches us, that there is nothing more hurtful to the church than schisms and divisions, especially about matters of religion: that Christians ought never to call themselves the disciples and followers of any minister or teacher, whoever he be; and that the ministers of the gospel, far from giving occasion to fuch divisions, or of keeping them up, ought, after the example of St Paul, to hinder them as much as possible, being always actuated by a spirit of humility and peace, feeking nothing but their Master's glory, and the edification of his church, which is best promoted by unity and concord. III. It appears from this chapter, that ministers ought to preach the gospel in great simplicity, without aiming at the wildom and eloquence of the world, which is nothing but foolishness before God; the end of their ministry being to preach Christ crucified. IV. What St Paul VOL. III. here here fays, shews, that Christians ought not to value riches, nobility, power, and other temporal advantages, which give no title to the grace of God, but are often an obstacle to true faith. Lastly, Since the doctrine of the gospel, and particularly the cross of Christ, is the means that God has chosen, in his wisdom and goodness, to save men; we ought to cleave to Jesus Christ, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanstification, and redemption.

## CHAP. II.

THIS chapter consists of three parts. St Paul fays, I. That he had preached the gospel with great simplicity. II. That though his doctrine was plain, yet it was nevertheless very sublime, and of a heavenly and divine original. III. Whence he concludes, that this doctrine being spiritual and heavenly, ought to be preached after the plainest manner; and that if it was rejected by any upon that account, it was because such men were carnal and earthly minded.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE ministers of Christ, and all Christians, should learn from this chapter, I. That the vain eloquence, and the false wisdom of the world, ought not to have any thing to do with the preaching of the gospel. II. That the doctrine of the gospel, though very plain, is the most sublime, and the most perfect that ever was preached; that it infinitely surpasses all that the most learned men could ever discover; teaching things which eye bath not seen, nor ear beard, neither bath it entered into the beart of man to conceive, what God bath revealed unto us by his spirit. It follows from hence, that a divine revelation was absolutely necessary to our salvation, which

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which we can attain no other way; that we ought therefore to esteem the doctrine of the gospel above all things; and that those who preach it should never depart from the Christian simplicity; and that this doctrine does not want to be supported by worldly eloquence. III. We ought likewise to obferve what St Paul fays farther, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto bim. This teaches us, that when men do not understand nor relish the doctrine of Jefus Christ, it is because they are carnal, full of prejudices, and earthly minded. This doctrine being altogether spiritual, can be received by none but those who are spiritual, who are weaned from the love of the world, and fuffer themselves to be guided by the spirit of God.

#### CHAP. III.

CT Paul does four things in this chapter: I. He I fays, that he had taught the Gorinthians nothing but the first principles of Christianity, because of their weak condition, and he reproaches them for continuing still in the same state, as appeared from the divisions that reigned among them on account of the ministers that preached the gospel to them. II. To put a stop to these divisions, he says, ministers are only instruments in the hand of God for the salvation of men, and that the whole fruit of their mimiltry proceeds from God alone. III. To the fame end he adds, that, like a wife mafter-builder, he had laid the foundation, that is, he was the first who preached the gospel to the Corintbians; and that those who came after him, ought to take care to preach none but true and useful doctrines, which he calls gold, filver, and precious stones; but not vain and doubtful doctrines, which he compares to hay or U 2 stubble;

stubble; and fays, that those who preach such doctrines would lose the fruits of their labour; but that nevertheless if they had preserved the fundamentals of Christianity, they would be faved, as passing through the fire, and by a particular favour. And lastly, St Paul declares, that the church being the temple and house of God, he will destroy those that hinder its edification, by teaching dangerous doctrines, and by ftirring up divisions, or in any other manner; and that the Corintbians should glory in God alone, and not in those who preached the gospel, since the apostles and other ministers were not appointed for their own advantage, but for the glory of God.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE four parts of this chapter furnish us with four instructions. I. That the ministers of Jefus Christ ought to propose his doctrine with prudence, and fuit their discourses to the capacity of those whom they teach. II. When St Paul says, that he planted, that Apollos watered, but that God gave the increase, this shews, on one hand, that the ministry of pastors and teachers is very necessary, it being the method which God has thought fit to make use of for the edification of the church; but that on the other hand, the efficacy of their preaching must be ascribed to God alone. III. The third instruction is, that it is of great importance that none but profitable and edifying doctrines be taught in the church; and that ministers should be careful never to mingle with the effential doctrines of religion fuch as be vain, uncertain, and useless, for fear of losing the fruit of their labour, and of hindering edification. IV. When St Paul represents to the Corinthians, that they were the temple of God; and that, if any one defiled this temple, him would God destroy; this should teach

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teach all Christians, and especially those who are set over the church, how careful they ought to be to procure the edification of others, and avoid every thing that may give offence, and occasion trouble in it. Lastly, The apostle shews, that instead of taking occasion from the ministry of the gospel to be divided, they ought to refer this holy office, and all other spiritual advantages they enjoy, and in general all things, to the glory of God and their own salvation. This is the great design they ought always to have in view.

#### CHAP. IV.

CT Paul's defign here, is to remedy the divisions I that prevailed in the church of Corinth, on account of the ministers who had preached the gospel there. In which view he does three things. fays, that the Corintbians ought to respect the ministers of Christ, but that it was not for them to prefer some before others; that although he discharged his office with a good conscience, he did not think himself better than his collegues; that all those gifts which ministers are endowed with, do proceed from God; and that it is God alone, and not men, who is to judge of their fidelity. II. And as the perfecutions to which the apostle was exposed, more than any other minister of the gospel, gave some men occafion to despise him; he takes an opportunity to describe the evils he endured, and the patience with which he fuffered, and even glories in them. to he might induce the Corintbians to think of him as they ought, and to imitate his patience, meeknels, and humility. III. He acquaints them, that he should shortly visit them, threatning to make use of that power which God had given him, to put a stop to the diforders in their church, and to punish those who were the authors of them.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

TIE see here; I. What sentiments Christians ought to entertain of the true ministers of Christ; namely, to esteem and reverence them, but yet without attributing to them what belongs only to God, and without adhering to some, and despissing others. II. The manner in which St Paul speaks of the different opinions men had of him, teaches us, that we ought not indeed to be intirely indifferent whether men think well or ill of us; yet, that we ought not to fet too high a value upon the opinion of men; that it is God only who can judge of our faithfulness, and that it is he who will make manifest hidden things, and the thoughts of mens hearts, and who will render to every one his due praises. III. That all the gifts and advantages we enjoy proceed from God; that we have nothing but what we have received from him; and that therefore, instead of valuing ourselves upon them, the glory thereof belongs to him alone. IV. We fee in the description which St Paul gives of his fufferings, that the faithful fervants of God, and all true Christians, may be exposed to difgrace and miseries of every kind; but the example of this apostle likewise shews, that such as are thus afflicted, far from thinking themselves unhappy in this condition, and growing uneafy under it, or defiring to revenge themselves upon those who are the cause of their sufferings, ought to bear all these evils with patience, and even with joy, for the edification of the church; and to pray for those who injure them; and to be little concerned at the hatred and contempt of the world, provided they have the approbation of God and their own conscience. The last verses of this chapter shew, that St Paul tenderly loved the Corintbians, that it was against his will that he threatned them with chastifement,

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dalou fe- them ment, and that he had nothing else in view but their edification. Such is the spirit of all the true ministers of the Lord.

#### CHAP. V.

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aftisement, I. ST Paul reproves the Corinthians for suffering among them an incessuous person, and he delivers him to Satan; that is to say, to be afflicted in his body by Satan, which was an extraordinary punishment that the apostles had power to inslict. II. He represents to them, by the comparison of leaven, that it is very dangerous to suffer notorious sinners in the church, since they infect and corrupt others. III. And lastly, he orders the Corinthians to cut off from among them, by excommunication, those that are impure, and all such as live in a scandalous manner, and not to consider them as brethren, or members of the church.

## REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter contains a very important doctrine; the necessity of discipline in the church, and especially of that part of discipline which consists in excommunication. St Paul reproves the Corintbians for not removing the incestuous person from among them; which teaches us, that when perfons, who stile themselves Christians, fall into sins which dishonour the religion of Jesus Christ, the whole church ought to mourn for it, and should not suffer those persons to remain in her communion; but that they ought to be cut off by excommunication. St Paul most expressly declares, that we ought not to acknowledge for brethren, nor even for Christians, the unclean, unjust, slanderers, drunkards, or other scandalous finners, nor have any familiar dealings with them. This is the law of Jefus Christ: This is what

the holy apostles have commanded in his name, and the rule appointed by them in all churches for the ho. nour of the Christian religion, and the saving the sinners themselves, and to prevent their evil examples from corrupting other members of the church, and this is what the first Christians religiously practised; on which account, we are forced to own, that the church is not now governed as it ought to be, fince this kind of excommunication is hardly exercised any where; nevertheless, the duty of all true Christians is to avoid, as far as possible, all correspondence with wicked men, and to diftinguish themselves from them, by a holy and exemplary life; and let us remember, that those sinners who are suffered to live in the external communion of the church, though they deferve to be excluded from it, are not owned by Christ for his true members, nor shall they escape the punishment due to their hypocrify and wicked. nels.

## CHAP. VI.

I. THE apostle reproves the Corinthians for having recourse to heathen judges and magistrates to determine their law-suits. II. He adds upon this occasion, that those who wrong their neighbour, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, any more than those who were guilty of impurity, and other crimes which he here mentions. III. He exhorts the Corinthians to pay great regard to the edification of their brethren, in the use of things indifferent and lawful; but above all, to avoid impurity, proving by several arguments, that this is by no means a matter of indifference, but in itself evil, and utterly inconsistent with the profession of Christianity.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE reflections on this chapter are the four following: I. That Christians, being brethren, ought to avoid law-fuits as much as possible; that they should endeavour to determine difficult points in an amicable way; and if they be forced to have recourse to judges, they should do it in a spirit of justice and equity, of meekness and moderation, and without giving any scandal. II. That those who wrong others, whether by unjust law-fuits, or in any other manner, shall no more partake of the kingdom of God, than the impure, than thieves and covetous, or other scandalous sinners. Let it be here observed, that some of the Corintbians had lived in these crimes while they were heathens, but that God engaged them to renounce them all, by calling them to the Christian religion, and by cleansing them from their fins by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the grace of his holy spirit; which shews, that our holy religion does not allow men to continue in their fins, but has a direct tendency to cleanse and sanctify them. and affords them all necessary means and affistance to that end. III. The third instruction relates to impurity. St Paul shews in this chapter, that this sin separates those who commit it from the communion of Christ, and suffers them no longer to be his members; that unclean persons grossly offend our blessed Saviour, dishonour their own body, which ought to be the temple of the holy Ghost, and thereby deprive themselves of that holy spirit. Lastly, He declares, that fince we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, our bodies belong to God as well as our fouls; that therefore we are no longer our own, but are bound to glorify God both with our fouls and bodies. All these considerations are of great weight, and fince St Paul alledges fo many reasons

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reasons to dissuade Christians from impurity, we plainly see that this sin is very great; that we ought to have it in abhorrence, and endeavour in all respects to lead a pure and holy life.

#### CHAP. VII.

CT Paul answers in this chapter several questions which the Corinthians had proposed about marriage. I. He gives an account of the institution and duties of the marriage state. II. He says, that there is an advantage in not being married; but that, however, Christians are at liberty to marry. III. He exhorts married persons not to separate, and shews what was the duty, in this respect, of such men and women as were married to heathers. IV. He orders all Christians to continue in the several callings and conditions in which providence had placed them, and to live according to the will of God. V. Laftly, He declares, that the condition of virgins, and those who lived in celibacy, and of widows, was the happiest, particularly in those times of persecution. But, however, that they were at liberty to marry.

## REFLECTIONS.

That marriage is a holy and honourable state; but that the duty of Christians in that state is, to live in union and concord, in purity and chastity, in piety and devotion, by setting apart seasons for fasting and prayer. II. That although the condition of those who do not marry be more happy, yet every man is lest to his liberty; that every one ought to regulate his conduct in this matter, as he finds himself called to live in a married or single state; but, that those who are not married, are bound to live in great purity and continency. III. That husbands and wives ought

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ought not to separate from each other; but, on the contrary, are to live peaceably together, and to edify each other, by endeavouring to promote the falvation of one another. IV. That God having thought fit there should be different states and conditions in the world, every one ought to continue in his calling, provided it be a lawful one, and faithfully discharge all the duties in which his calling engages him, without endeavouring to alter his condition by finful methods. V. That persons who do not marry have feveral advantages over others, provided they live in chaftity, fince they may ferve God with less distraction in fuch a state; and in times of persecution are more free and better able to discharge their duty; but that, whether people marry, or whether they live in celibacy, they ought to be pure and chafte both in body and mind. VI. Another useful instruction which St Paul here gives us, and which is adapted to all feafons and all perfons, is, that our lives are short, that our condition in this world is very uncertain, and all things here below are tranlitory and vain; for which reason we ought not to fet our hearts upon them, but should possess all things as if we possessed them not; that they that weep, should be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passetb away.

## CHAP. VIII.

ST Paul examines the question proposed to him by the Corintbians, whether it was lawful for Christians to eat of things that had been offered to idols, and to be present at the feasts of the heathens in the temples of their false gods: To which he answers,

I. That Christians know very well there is but one God, and that idols are lifeless and vain, and could not defile the meats offered to them, and therefore that it was lawful to eat even of meats of. fered to idols. Nevertheless the apostle observes. that all had not the same degree of knowledge in this particular; and therefore, II. He warns those Christians who were most knowing, not to abuse their liberty in this point, for fear they should, by eating things offered to idols, give offence to weak Christians, and occasion them to fin by eating contrary to the dictates of their conscience, and even to fall into idolatry.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THOUGH we have no need to be informed at this time of the use of things facrificed to idols, fince the idolatry of the heathens is abolished, and we all know that there is but one God, and that idols are nothing; yet that does not hinder, but the doctrine which St Paul lays down in this chapter, may be of general use. He teaches us here, that all Christians, and especially those who are best instructed, should have a great regard to those that are not fo well informed, and carefully avoid giving them scandal. The apostle further informs us, that we may offend our neighbour, not only by actions directly criminal, but likewise by such as are lawful; for which reason we ought to behave with great circumspection and prudence in the use of those things, and not always do what is lawful. He shews us likewise, that it is a great sin to give scandal to any one, fince thereby we may be the occasion of our neighbour's destruction, and may be extremely guilty even against Christ himself. These rules are of great use, and ought to be continually remembred, that we may do nothing, even in things lawful, which

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#### CHAP. IX.

CT Paul's design in this chapter is to confirm, by I his example, what he had taught in the foregoing; namely, that when the edification of our neighbour may be promoted by it, we ought to abstain even from things lawful. In this view he does three things. I. He afferts his right as an apostle, to a flipend for his support. II. He adds, that he had not made use of his right, but shewn great condefcenfion towards all, accommodating himfelf to the scruples of the weak, for fear of creating in them an aversion to the gospel. III. He exhorts the Corinthians to imitate him, and to forego the use of lawful things, when the edification of their neighbour, and the falvation of their own fouls require And to engage them so to do, he proposes the example of those who formerly strove in the public games of Greece, and who lived in great abstemiousness, abstaining from every thing contrary to the way of life they had engaged in.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE general design of this chapter is to teach us, that we must not always do what is lawful, and what we may have a right to do; but that we ought to abstain from such a right, when the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour require it; and that it is the duty of Christians to accommodate themselves as much as possible to all, to have always a regard to the edification of others, and particularly the weak, in order to bring them to the faith. Besides this general doctrine, which is of singular use, we have here some particular instructions, the chief

of which are the three following: I. That Christian churches are obliged by the divine law, and by the command of Jesus Christ, to provide for the main. tenance and support of pastors and their families. II. That the ministers of the gospel, in imitation of St Paul, ought to behave with much prudence and charity, difregarding their own private interest, and adapting themselves to mens weakness, and endeavouring by all means to gain to Christ as many souls as they can. III. That we cannot discharge the duties of our Christian calling, without living in great temperance; that to that end we must mortify our bodies, bring them into subjection by abstinence and labour; avoiding idleness, luxury, and every thing that indulges too much the flesh, and pursuing such a kind of life as is conformable to the precepts of the gospel, and the example of Christ and his apostles; that by these means we may obtain the glorious reward which is referved for all those only that shall carefully discharge these duties.

## CHAP. X.

THE apostle continuing the subject he had been treating of in the two preceding chapters, touching the use of meats sacrificed to idols, represents here to the Corintbians, I. That though the ancient Israelites were the people of God, and enjoyed advantages like those which Christians now do, yet they had been drawn away to idolatry and impurity, by being present at the idolatrous seasts; and that by their sensuality and frequent rebellions they had brought upon themselves the judgments of God. He proposes these examples to the Corintbians, and particularly to those who think themselves least in danger, and most knowing in their duty, to prevent their

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their going to the idolatrous feafts, for fear of expoling themselves to temptation and falling into idolatry. II. In confirmation of this point, he adds further, that the use of the Lord's-supper, whereby Christians partake together of the sacrifice of Jesus Chrift, by drinking of the confecrated cup, and eating all of the same bread, did not allow them to affift at the entertainments which the pagans made in honour of their idols, fince that would be partaking of their facrifices, and having fellowship with devils and idolators, which must necessarily expose them to divine vengeance. III. He concludes that Christians might buy and eat of all kind of meats, and in private eat of any thing that is fet before them, unlessthey were told that fuch meats had been facrificed. to idols; in which case they ought to forbear, not because it was finful to eat thereof, but to avoid giving scandal to those who informed them of it. He concludes this subject with exhorting the Corinthians to regard in all things the glory of God, and the edification of their neighbours.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WHAT has been said in this chapter obliges us to consider, I. That if the ancient Jews were punished so severely for having abused the savour God had granted them, we shall be punished much more severely, if we abuse those that we have received, since they are infinitely more excellent. II. The example of the Israelites, who, by being present at the feasts of idolators, fell into impurity and idolatry, and the divine vengeance for so doing, is a warning to us, as St Paul says, to avoid all occasions of sin, and particularly to shun all sensuality and uncleanness, lest, if we suffer ourselves to be carried away by them, we be exposed to the judgments of God. III. We ought to consider, that if St Paul afferts,

afferts, that Christians might not partake of the table of the Lord, and at the same time eat of that which was facrificed to idols, the participation of the Lord's-supper is not less incompatible with a carnal and corrupt life; and that the public and folemn commemoration which we make in this facrament of the facrifice of Jesus Christ, does indifpensibly oblige us to lead a pure and holy life. IV. Let us carefully retain this general doctrine, that in all our actions, even in those that are indifferent and lawful, we ought always to have in view the glory of God, and the edification of our neighbour, as St Paul directs by the rule which he gives us: whether ye eat or drink, or what soever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

#### CHAP. XI.

HIS chapter, in which St Paul reproves the Corintbians for the disorders committed at their religious meetings, consists of two parts. I. In the first, he prescribes the manner in which men and women should behave in the church; he ordains that the men should have their head uncovered, when speaking of divine things; but that the women should cover their head; and what he fays is founded upon the rules of decency, which required that women should not appear in public without being veiled, and their head covered, which was likewife the custom of the Jews, and other people in that age. II. In the fecond part, he reproves the Corinthians for their irreverence and disorder in celebrating the Lord's-supper, after their feasts of charity; and to induce them to correct those abuses, he relates the institution of this facrament; he shews the use that should be made of it, and tells the Corinthians, that it was for the punishment of their indevotion in the participation of

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## REFLECTIONS.

THE directions St Paul gave the Corintbians upon what passed in their assemblies; instruct us in general, that order, gravity and decency, ought to he observed in religious affemblies; and particularly, that women ought to appear there with respect, and in fuch a manner as may denote the fubmission, humility, and modelty, proper to their fex. In the next place, we should make the most serious reflections upon what St Paul fays here, concerning the Lord's supper and its use: It appears by this chapter, I. That this facrament is a folemn inftitution of our bleffed redeemer; and that, in the time of St Paul, it was celebrated in all the Christian churches. II. That the end for which Christ appointed this holy supper, was to be a memorial of his death, until his coming again at the last day. III. That we ought to celebrate this facrament with very great reverence; that we hould examine ourselves before we come to it; that those who do not so, and who partake of it unworthily, are guilty of a very criminal contempt of Christ himfelf, and eat and drink their own condemnation. IV. And lastly, it is to be observed, that God punished the abuse of the Lord's supper, in the time of the apostles, by sickness and death: which plainly proves, that this facrament is a most holy institution, and that those who profane it, either by rashness or hypocrify, may expect a most severe condemnation.

#### CHAP. XII.

THE delign of St Paul in this chapter, is to inftruct the Corintbians about the gifts of the holy Ghost, and the use that is to be made of them, and to Vol. III.

afferts, that Christians might not partake of the table of the Lord, and at the same time eat of that which was facrificed to idols, the participation of the Lord's-supper is not less incompatible with a carnal and corrupt life; and that the public and folemn commemoration which we make in this facrament of the facrifice of Jesus Christ, does indifpensibly oblige us to lead a pure and holy life. Let us carefully retain this general doctrine, that in all our actions, even in those that are indifferent and lawful, we ought always to have in view the glory of God, and the edification of our neighbour, as St Paul directs by the rule which he gives us: whether ye eat or drink, or what soever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

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## REFLECTIONS.

THE directions St Paul gave the Corintbians upon what passed in their assemblies, instruct us in general, that order, gravity and decency, ought to be observed in religious affemblies; and particularly, that women ought to appear there with respect, and in fuch a manner as may denote the fubmission, humiity, and modefty, proper to their fex. In the next place, we should make the most serious reflections upon what St Paul fays here, concerning the Lord's upper and its use: It appears by this chapter, I. That his facrament is a folemn inftitution of our bleffed edeemer; and that, in the time of St Paul, it was elebrated in all the Christian churches. II. That he end for which Christ appointed this holy supper, was to be a memorial of his death, until his coming gain at the last day. III. That we ought to celerate this facrament with very great reverence; that we hould examine ourselves before we come to it; that hose who do not so, and who partake of it unworthily, re guilty of a very criminal contempt of Christ himof, and eat and drink their own condemnation. IV. and lastly, it is to be observed, that God punished he abuse of the Lord's supper, in the time of the postles, by sickness and death: which plainly proves. hat this facrament is a most holy institution, and that hose who profane it, either by rashness or hypocrify, hay expect a most severe condemnation.

#### CHAP. XII.

THE design of St Paul in this chapter, is to inftruct the Corintbians about the gifts of the holy host, and the use that is to be made of them, and to Vol. III. prevent divisions in the church upon that account; for which purpose he does two things. I. He takes notice, that as they had renounced heathen idolatry, God had poured on them the gift of the holy Spirit; that God granted to the ministers of his church. and even to feveral of the believers of that time, divers extraordinary gifts; fuch as the gift of instruct. ing others, of speaking and interpreting divers languages, of healing the fick, of prophecy, and the like; that all these gifts proceeded from the same author; but that they were different, and that all those who had received the spirit of God, did not possess the same gifts, nor in the same degree. Il He shews that these gifts proceeded all from the same spirit, and since believers composed together but one body, they ought to be employed to the common ad vantage and edification of the church. This St Pan illustrates by the comparison of a human body; and observes, that although all the members have not the fame functions, nor the fame dignity, they are not withstanding all necessary, and do all contribute to the good of the body. By this St Paul would con vince the Corinthians, that these gifts of the hol Ghost, which were given them for the public good and to unite them to each other, should not be the occasion of divisions among them.

## REFLECTIONS.

THAT we may improve by this chapter, it mu be observed, I. That the miraculous gifts whice division were formerly in the church, were an undeniable protein and fur of the divinity of the Christian religion, and a very effect that means to confirm Christians in the faith, and confirm the both Jews and Gentiles. For though these miracular traordinary gifts are not to be met with now, it a thurch, pears from this chapter, that they were bestowed by her here. God on Christians, in the time of the apostles in

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St Paul speaks of them as a thing well known at that time by every body, and very common in the church. II. What St Paul fays of these miraculous gifts, we should apply to the ordinary gifts of the spirit of God, and learn, that all fpiritual gifts and graces proceed from the holy Ghost; that God bestows them upon men in a different degree, both for their own falvation, and the good of their brethren; and, as we compose but one body, we ought to apply all the gifts we have received to one and the fame end, which is, to the common edification and benefit of the church, and to live in perfect union and harmony, each of us being contented with that measure of grace which God has been pleased to distribute to us, and possessing it with humility. Lastly, St Paul shews, that there are gifts more excellent, and more useful in their nature, than the miraculous ones beforementioned, namely, those of true faith and charity, of which he treats in the following chapter; these are therefore the gifts which we ought most earnestly to seek after.

#### CHAP. XIII.

I. OT Paul having treated of miraculous and fupernatural gifts, teaches, that how great and excellent foever these are, they are of no value withit mu and characters of this virtue, proves that it prevents whice divisions, jealousies, pride, provoking one another, and suspicions; and this he says, because these vices reigned among the Corintbians. III. And lastly, He and con hews, that charity is the chief of all virtues, because these miraculous gifts were not always to remain in the chief of the chief, whereas charity is never to have an end, here sowed hereafter. out charity. II. He afterwards describes the nature

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter, which treats of charity, ought to be continually meditated on by all Christians. St Paul here shews the nature and excellency of this virtue. He proves the excellency of it on these two accounts: I. That without charity, that is to fay, without a fincere love of our neighbour, without a fpirit of peace, unity and meekness, all other gifts, even those which are most excellent, such as the gift of tongues and of miracles, are unprofitable, and worth nothing in the fight of God. II. That this is a virtue which will last for ever, and which will render us perfect in heaven, as it does upon earth, whereas miraculous gifts shall cease. The apostle instructs us next in the nature of charity. He fays, that those persons who are endowed with this virtue, are neither envious nor haughty, nor fuspicious, nor felfinterested, nor peevish, nor quarressome; but that the are patient, meek, peaceable; that they judge chantably of their neighbour; that they do good; that they bear all things. This description of charity and its feveral effects, plainly proves that charity the fum of all other virtues, and the true way to dil charge all the duties of Christianity.

## CHAP. XIV.

S T Paul continues to speak of miraculor gifts, and particularly of the gift of speaking divers languages; and says, that of all spirits gifts which God vouchsafed to particular person that of prophecy, that is to say, the gift of teaching exhorting, and explaining scripture, was of me fervice in the edification of the church. This hear firms, by observing how useless, and even about was, to speak strange languages, if those who has

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the f extrac proof excelle tage, of the great e mome to the God h plain t accordi prayers and, i church the con fimple and Jaff St Paul and par God is and pea the ch appears did not understand them. II. He orders next, that those who speak those languages, or who had any revelation, should proceed in order, and after one another, and that there should always be somebody to interpret what they said; he directs farther, that women should keep silence in the church; and that all should be done with decency and order.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THOUGH the gift of speaking divers languages is ceased in the church, and there be no revelations at prefent, as there were in the time of the apostles, yet we may gather from this chapter the following important instructions: I. That these extraordinary gifts were, as St Paul fays, a strong proof of the truth of the gospel. II. That however excellent fuch gifts were, they were of no advantage, unless applied to the instruction and edification of the whole church, which ought always to be the great end of religion. III. That it is of the utmost moment, and absolutely necessary, to communicate to the people a clear knowledge of the truths which God has revealed to us, and for that purpose, to explain the scriptures familiarly and intelligibly; that accordingly, the reading of the Bible, exhortations, prayers, pfalmody, celebration of divine fervice, and, in general, every thing that is done in the church, ought to be performed in a language which the common people understand, and in a plain and simple manner, and suited to every capacity. IV. and laftly, We ought carefully to attend to the rule St Paul lays down throughout this whole chapter, and particularly in the last verse, where he says, that God is not a God of confusion, but a God of order and peace; and that all things ought to be done in the church with decency, order, and gravity. appears from hence, that what relates to the exter-X 3

nal part of religion, and the service of God, is not a matter of indifference; and that it is the will of God, that order, decency and uniformity be observed in all Christian churches.

## C H A P. XV. 1-34.

S T Paul proves in this chapter the refurrection of the dead, against certain persons who denied this doctrine. For which purpose he lays down, I. That our Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; which he proves by the testimony of the apostles, and several other persons. II. He infers from thence, that the dead shall rise again, which he illustrates and confirms by several other arguments.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter is an excellent discourse, in which the doctrine of the refurrection is fully explained. St Paul teaches us, I. That the whole Christian religion is founded upon the refurrection of Jesus Christ, and that this resurrection is a certain and undoubted fact, attested by the apostles themselves, whose evidence cannot be questioned. II. St Paul shews, that the dead will infallibly rife again, and the proofs alledged by him are the following: That if the dead were not to be raifed, Christ would not have rifen, and our faith would be vain; that the faithful, who are dead in the Lord, would perish for ever; that Christians would be the most milerable of all men, by reason of the persecutions to which they were exposed; and that the evil which Adam has brought upon us, by subjecting us to death, would not otherwise be remedied. He farther observes, that Christ could not be faid fully to reign over all things, if by raifing us he did not destroy death, which is our last enemy; and finally, that

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that if there was no such thing as the resurrection, it would be a great folly for Christians voluntarily to expose themselves to all the evils which they did undergo. All these considerations prove the certainty of the resurrection at the last day; and let us return thanks to God for having built the hopes of our resurrection upon such a sure foundation; and labour to be consistend more and more in this hope; taking heed, as St Paul exhorts, that the words and examples of the impious and profane do not stagger our faith, and studying to live a holy and unblameable life.

## C H A P. XV. 35,-58.

ST Paul, after having proved the refurrection of the dead, shews, I. That although our bodies are destroyed by death, they will be restored to life, and that then they will be no longer corruptible, weak and mortal, as they now are, but incorruptible, immortal, and glorious; which he explains by the comparison of grain that is sown, and by some other resemblances. II. He speaks next of the change that will happen to those who shall be living at the time of the resurrection. And, III. concludes, by describing those sentiments of joy and piety, which the belief of the resurrection ought to inspire all true Christians with.

## REFLECTIONS.

ST Paul's design is, to teach us, that although death destroys our bodies, and reduces them to dust, they will nevertheless be raised again by the almighty power of our Lord; and that the bodies thus raised, will be incorruptible and glorious, insomuch that true believers shall all be then like Jesus Christ. Besides this, we see that those who shall be X 4 alive

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t deally, that alive at the end of the world, will be changed in an instant; and that accordingly all the faithful will become immortal. The expectation of this great glory, which is referved for us, ought to fill us with hope and joy; to diffipate entirely the terrors of death, and to make us fay with St Paul, O death, where is thy fling? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. But the hope of this resurrection of our bodies, does likewise oblige us to preserve them in great purity, and to practile continually all the duties of Christianity; this is what St Paul exhorts us to do in these words, which shew the use we should make of this doctrine: Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for a smuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

#### CHAP. XVI.

1. THE apostle exhorts the Corinthians to contribute to a collection that was making for the churches of Judea. II. He promises to come to fee them in a little time. III. He recommends to them Timothy, and some other persons. concludes with falutations and good wifhes, and by declaring, that those who did not love the Lord Jefus Christ fincerely, were exposed to the judgment of God, and ought not to be looked upon as members of the church.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE are to observe, in the first part of this chapter, St Paul's exhortations to the Corinthians, to engage them to affift the churches of Judea, for which there was a collection making, and to lay apart fomething on that account every first day

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day of the week. This is a lesson to us, that every one ought to give alms according to his ability, as often as there is a proper occasion; and that the first day of the week, or Sunday, was, from that time, particularly dedicated to works of piety and charity. Il. The manner in which St Paul recommends Timothy, and some other zealous and godly persons, teaches us, that we ought to have in great reverence the true ministers of the Lord, who have devoted themselves to his service, and submit to them. Iti. The falutations we read at the end of this epiftle. shew, that there ought to be a most strict communion among the churches and Christians of all parts, leading them to love one another affectionately; and especially that God's ministers ought to pray without ceasing for all the faithful, wishing them an increase of the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Finally, We ought to give a very particular attention to the anathema which St Paul denounces against all those that do not love Christ sincerely. He threatens them with a curse of God, and forbids us to look upon fuch as Christians. This denotes plainly, that it is the duty of the Church to excommunicate scandalous and profane persons; and that all fuch as have not a true love for our Saviour, and who neglect to keep his commandments, do by no means belong to him, but remain under the curse of God.

The End of the first Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians.

THE

## SECOND EPISTLE of St PAUL

TOTHE

# CORINTHIANS.

## ARGUMENT.

This second epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, was writ about the fifty sixth year of our Lord. The principal design of the apostle in this epistle, is to defend his ministry against those who disparaged it among the Corinthians.

#### CHAP. I.

FTER the falutation, St Paul speaks in this chapter, I. Of the persecutions he had been exposed to in Asia, at Ephesus, and from which God had delivered him by a kind of miracle. II. He tells the Corinthians, in the next place, that if he had not come to see them, as he had promised, it did not proceed from levity or inconstancy, or want of kindness towards them; but that he had delayed his journey, that he might not be obliged to reprove and chastise them for the disorders that prevailed in their church.

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## REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

HAT St Paul fays in the beginning of this epiftle of his fufferings, as well as of the affiltance and comfort which God had afforded him under them, teaches us, I. That the faithful are sometimes exposed to great dangers, and extream afflictions, but that God supports and strengthens them in such a flate, and at length graciously delivers them. II. That these afflictions produce very happy effects, not only in the joy of those who are afflicted, but likewise in the edification of their brethren; fince those who have thus fuffered, are better able to comfort and encourage others in any trouble or affliction. III. As St Paul always defires to be affifted with the prayers of the Corinthians, we have reason to conclude that the mutual prayers of the faithful do greatly contribute to obtain from God deliverance from danger, comfort, and all the graces we ftand in need of. The fecond: part of this chapter fuggests two remarks upon St. Paul's conduct. I. The fincerity of his behaviour towards the Corintbians in particular; and II. His meekness and prudence in deferring his journey to them, that he might spare them. Such should be the character of Christ's ministers. As the master whom they profess to serve is love and truth itself, they ought to behave with fincerity and candour, and particularly to avoid every thing that favours of levity and inconflancy, that so they may thereby approve themselves both to God and man. And on the other hand, to spare sinners as much as they can, giving them time to repent, and never making use of severity till it becomes absolutely necessary, and cannot be avoided.

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## II CORINTHIANS.

#### CHAP. II.

I. OT Paul tells the Corintbians, that it was to of fpare them, and that he might not have the forrow of reproving them for their irregularities, that he forbore going to Corinth; and he orders them to receive into the peace of the church the incestuous person that had been excommunicated, mentioned in the former epiftle, because he had repented. II. He acquaints them with fome of his travels, and upon that occasion speaks of the efficacy and fruits of his ministry.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. C T Paul shews in this chapter the most tender regard for the Corintbians, and great charity even to that enormous finner whom he had delivered to Satan, but who had afterwards repented. These kind and affectionate fentiments of St Paul, may ferve for a rule to pastors, and inspire them with a tender love for their flocks, and particularly for the greatest sinners. It is matter of great grief to the ministers of Christ, when they are forced to use severity, and the greatest joy when they observe sinners returning from the error of their ways. After the apostle had reproved the church of Corinth for not excommunicating the incestuous person, and had actually excommunicated him himfelf, he orders him again to be received into the church, and to be forgiven, because the punishment had worked a thorough repentance and reformation in him. This is that just mixture of severity and candour, which should be observed in the exercise of discipline, not suffering fcandalous offenders to continue in communion with the church, but at the fame time being ready to receive them again with joy and gladness, as soon

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as they are humbled, and have given fufficient proofs of their reformation. II. St Paul's thankfulness to God for the glorious success of his ministry, is a proof of his humility as well as of his great zeal. true ministers of Christ have no greater joy, than that of making known the will of God to men; and always attribute to God alone, and to the efficacy of his grace, the good fuccefs they meet with. III. The last verses of this chapter teach us, that the preaching of the gospel does not produce the same effect in all; that it is to some a savour of death, that is to say, an occasion of condemnation, since by rejecting this gospel they become more wicked, and aggravate their punishment; but to others it is a savour of life, that is to fay, an efficacious means to bring them to a fpiritual life, and to falvation.

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#### CHAP. III.

I. O T Paul represents to the Corintbians, that their conversion to the Christian religion was a sufficient proof of his calling, and that he stood in need of no other recommendation to them, than the testimony of their conscience, and the gifts of the holy Spirit, which had been bestowed on them abundantly; but he acknowledges at the same time, that the efficacy of his ministry proceeded only from God. II. He shews in the next place, that the ministry of the gospel is much more excellent than that of the law. forafmuch as this last was imperfect, incapable of giving life, and was not to continue always; whereas that of the golpel was spiritual and eternal, giving life. From whence St Paul concludes, that those who adhered to the ceremonies and law of Moses. remained in ignorance and mifery; and that none but those who cleave to the gospel are truly enlightened, and enjoy the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

## 318 II CORINTHIANS,

The apostle says all this to defend himself against certain teachers that opposed him, and made a shew of great zeal for the law of Moses.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter teaches us, I That the greatest glory of the ministers of Jesus Christ, and what recommends them in the fight of God and man, is the fruits of their preaching, and the share they have in the love and affection of Christians. II. That they ought not to presume on their own strength, nor afcribe to themselves the success of their ministry; but that the honour of it is due to God alone. III. That the gospel is much more excellent than the law, and its ministry infinitely more glorious than that of Moses, fince the Christian doctrine gives us a much more perfect knowledge of the will of God by Jesus Christ, making us partakers of the true liberty and glory of the Lord himself, by fanctifying our natures, and giving us a fure and joyful hope of immortality. From whence it follows, that if there be any who do not believe, it proceeds from wilful blindness; that we ought to effeem this gospel above all things, and that those who preach it, and those who make profession of it, ought to do it openly and fincerely, and without shame, as St Paul will shew us in the following chapter.

#### CHAP. IV.

I. THE apostle continues to speak of his courage and sincerity in the exercise of his ministry; but observes, that there were some who did not believe the gospel, wilfully shutting their eyes against that divine light which should guide them. II. He says farther, that he himself, and other ministers, being weak men, the efficacy of their preach-

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ing did not proceed from themselves, but came from God alone. He mentions likewise, the persecutions and sufferings to which he was exposed; and says, that faith in Christ, the hopes of the resurrection, and the firm expectation of eternal glory, made him not lose courage, but undergo all these evils with perseverance, and even with joy.

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## REFLECTIONS.

THE confiderations which occur to us here, are the following: I. That the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to put away all artifice and distimulation, and to speak always freely and sincerely, as in the presence of God, seeking only to make manifest the truth in the consciences of all men. II. That if there are any who are not fanctified and enlightened by the gospel, but remain in unbelief, it is wholly their own fault, because the love of this world has blinded them. III. That the fervants of God, and all Christians, ought to bear with courage the severest afflictions, since they tend to the edification of the church, and fince we know that those who partake of the fufferings of Jefus Christ, shall likewise partake of his refurrection, life and glory. That the afflictions of this life can only hurt the body, but give new life and vigour to the foul; that they are but light, and of short duration, and work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of But if we would make all this advantage glory. of afflictions and not fink under them, we must judge of afflictions, by the light of faith, not looking at the things which are feen, and are temporal, but at the things which are not feen, which are

#### CHAP. V.

I. HE apostle continues the discourse he had begun concerning the afflictions he underwent, and the comfort he received from the hope of the refurrection and a better life; he speaks of the happiness which the faithful shall enjoy after death; and fays, that the confideration of that happiness, and of the last judgment, made him earnestly defire to leave this world, to be with the Lord; and that in this expectation, he suffered afflictions with courage, and laboured to become acceptable to God, by faithfully discharging his duty. II. He begins again to discourse about his ministry, and says, that his only aim was to bring men to the faith; which he thought a sufficient proof of the honour of his apo-Atleship against his adversaries; adding, that the love of Jesus Christ, who died for all men, was a strong motive to him, to live only for the edification of the faithful. Lastly, He declares, he had no regard to external things, fuch as the advantages which the Tews enjoyed over the Gentiles, and so much boasted of. And that as God had united both Jews and Gentiles, reconciling all men in Christ Jesus, he had no other defign in his ministry than to bring men to God, and make them become new creatures.

## REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter contains very comfortable and useful instructions. We see here, I. That the faithful know and believe affuredly that the the body be destroyed by death, yet there is another more happy state, and never-fading glory, prepared for them, and that when they leave this body they will be with the Lord. This hope, full of comfort and glory, supports them in their afflictions and trials, and continually

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tinually animates them to a holy life. II. St Paul teaches us in this chapter, that We must all appear before the judgment feat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that be bath done, whether it be good or bad; and shews, that the use to be made of this doctrine is, to live in the fear of the Lord, fludying to render ourselves acceptable to him at all times and in all places, and to inspire others with the same sentiments. III. The apostle proposes another very powerful motive to the discharge of these duties, when he adds, that the great love which Christ has shewn us, in dying for our falvation, is a most pressing argument, if we understand it rightly, to live no longer to ourselves, but to employ our whole life for the edification of our brethren, and to the glory of him who died and rose again for us. Lastly, Since the design of the ministry of the gospel is, as St Paul teaches, to make men become new creatures, and to reconcile them to God by Jesus Christ; all those who pretend to call themselves Christians, ought to set a high value upon this gospel, and zealously improve the means which God offers them to be reconciled with him, and to endeavour to wean themselves from the things of this world, to become new creatures, by regeneration and a constant application to holiness.

## CHAP. VI.

To which add the first verse of Chap. VII.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. The apostle says, that he had endeavoured to discharge his ministry with integrity, zeal, charity, and patience, in the midst of the afflictions and disgraces to which he had been exposed; and he conjures the Corinthians to make suitable returns to his great Vol. III.

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I. HE apostle continues the discourse he had begun concerning the afflictions he underwent, and the comfort he received from the hope of the refurrection and a better life; he speaks of the happiness which the faithful shall enjoy after death; and fays, that the confideration of that happiness, and of the last judgment, made him earnestly defire to leave this world, to be with the Lord; and that in this expectation, he fuffered afflictions with courage, and laboured to become acceptable to God, by faith. fully discharging his duty. II. He begins again to discourse about his ministry, and says, that his only aim was to bring men to the faith; which he thought a sufficient proof of the honour of his apoftleship against his adversaries; adding, that the love of Jefus Christ, who died for all men, was a strong motive to him, to live only for the edification of the faithful. Laftly, He declares, he had no regard to external things, fuch as the advantages which the Jews enjoyed over the Gentiles, and so much boasted of. And that as God had united both Jews and Gentiles, reconciling all men in Christ Jesus, he had no other defign in his ministry than to bring men to God, and make them become new creatures.

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tinually animates them to a holy life. II. St Paul teaches us in this chapter, that We must all appear before the judgment feat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that be bath done, whether it be good or bad; and shews, that the use to be made of this doctrine is, to live in the fear of the Lord, fludying to render ourselves acceptable to him at all times and in all places, and to inspire others with the fame fentiments. III. The apostle proposes another very powerful motive to the discharge of these duties, when he adds, that the great love which Christ has shewn us, in dying for our falvation, is a most preffing argument, if we understand it rightly, to live no longer to ourselves, but to employ our whole life for the edification of our brethren, and to the glory of him who died and rose again for us. Laftly, Since the defign of the ministry of the gospel is, as St Paul teaches, to make men become new creatures, and to reconcile them to God by Jesus Christ; all those who pretend to call themselves Christians, ought to set a high value upon this gospel, and zealously improve the means which God offers them to be reconciled with him, and to endeavour to wean themselves from the things of this world, to become new creatures, by regeneration and a constant application to holiness.

## CHAP. VI.

To which add the first verse of Chap. VII.

THIS chapter confifts of two parts. I. The apostle says, that he had endeavoured to discharge his ministry with integrity, zeal, charity, and patience, in the midst of the afflictions and disgraces to which he had been exposed; and he conjures the Corinthians to make suitable returns to his great Vol. III.

## 222 II CORINTHIANS,

zeal and fervent love towards them. II. He exhorts them to imitate his zeal and fincerity, by making a pure profession of Christianity, avoiding all intercourse with idolators, either by marriage, or by being present at their worship, and partaking of their feasts; and by becoming pure both in body and soul.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. WE have in this chapter a remarkable description of those virtues which ought to adorn the ministers of the gospel. St Paul teaches them, by his own example, to discharge their office with fidelity; to behave in fuch a manner, as to give no offence; not to dishonour their ministry, but to make it honourable by the purity of their life, by a fincere and open profession of the truth, by a perfect charity, by meekness, by humility and patience in affliction. These are the virtues which do honour to the ministers of Christ, and add great weight to the gospel they preach. II. We learn in the second place, that as pastors ought entirely to devote themfelves to the fervice of the church, and be full of tender love for those committed to their charge, so these ought to make suitable returns, and to love them no less fincerely in the Lord. III. As St Paul forbids the Corinthians to have to do with ide lators, so neither is it lawful for Christians to asso ciate themselves with carnal men, and to join a worldly life to the profession of the gospel. Because there can be no agreement between righteousness and unrighteousness, between light and darkness; we ought therefore to avoid correspondence with worldly men, to withdraw ourselves from them and to have no share in their fins; to cleanse our selves from all defilement of flesh and spirit perfect ing boliness in the fear of God. This we are en gage made upon prom

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gaged to by the great and precious promises God has made us of being our God and Father, and looking upon us as his people, his children, and heirs of the promises.

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#### CHAP. VII.

In the fame affection for him as he had for them. Il. He expresses his great joy at hearing, by Titus, the effect of his epistle with respect to the incestuous person; from whence he takes occasion to speak of the nature and effects of true repentance.

#### REFLECTIONS.

W E must make the following remarks upon this chapter. I. That there ought to be a great love, and mutual tenderness between pastors and their flocks; fuch for instance as St Paul had conceived for the Corintbians, and which he wished they might have for him. II. The manner of the Corinthians receiving Titus, and the effect which St Paul's reproofs produced in them, teach us, that churches ought to receive with love and confidence the faithful ministers of the Lord, and submit to their corrections and remonstrances. III. St Paul's great joy upon Titus's informing him of the happy state of the church of Corinth, shews, that the greatest happiness pastors can enjoy, is to see the good effects of their ministry, and have proofs of their peoples affection. Laftly, This chapter instructs us in the nature of true repentance. St Paul lays, there is a worldly forrow, a forrow which is owing to the love of the world, and a regard to things temporal, which is not attended with a fincere change, and only produces death; whereas godly forrow is attended with peace and unspeakable comfort, and Y 2 pro-

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produces the most happy effects; since it fills those who are affected with it with a lively forrow, and just indignation against themselves, inspiring them with fear and zeal, and leading them to repair, as much as possible, the evil they have done.

#### CHAP. VIII.

I. HE apostle informs the Corintbians, of the liberality which the churches of Macedonia had shewn in a collection made for the churches of Jerusalem. II. He exhorts them to imitate their example, and finish the collection which had been begun the year before; and tells them, that he sent them for that purpose Titus, and another person, which was probably St Luke.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter furnishes us with divers instructions about alms. I. The first is, that Christians are obliged to exercise charity as often as they meet with an occasion, and are able to do it, especially when it is to affift their brethren. St Paul fays upon this subject, that persons who have devoted themselves to God, and are well instructed in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, do always discharge this duty with pleasure. II. The example of the churches of Macedonia, which the apo-He proposes to the Corintbians, shews, that such as exercise charity do very great service, since they not only relieve the necessitous, but likewise set a good pattern to the whole caurch, and ftir up others to imitate the fame. III. That in works of charity, God regards chiefly the readiness and good will with which it is performed. IV. That charity ought to be done in a just proportion, so that every one may contribute according to his power, and that forme

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fome be not more burdened than others; and that it is but reasonable that those who have been relieved, should likewise assist others in their turn. V. And lastly, The great precaution that St Paul uses in the distribution of collections, that no body might blame him, and the care he takes to put them into the hands of faithful and approved persons, shew, that we ought to administer charity with very great integrity and prudence; and that they who have the care of distributing the alms of the faithful, ought to do it in such a manner as to leave no room for reproach, nor even, if possible, for the least suspicion.

#### CHAP. IX. resignate gaing

I. S T Paul continues to exhort the Corinthians to Saffift the churches of Judea, and to do it bountifully and freely. II. And that he may engage them to this duty, he fets before them the bleffing that charitable persons are to expect from God; and the good effects which the exercise of tharity produces, to the glory of God, and the edification of the church.

## REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter treats of alms and charity as well as the foregoing, and the apostle proposes here particularly three things, viz. The manner of giving alms; the reward of the charitable; and the good effects that charity produces. I. As to the manner, St Paul says, that in order to please God, we must give as much as we are able, with chearfulness and liberality, because God loves a chearful giver. II. The promises he makes the Corinthians, do not suffer us to doubt but God will reward the beneficent and charitable, even with

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temporal bleffings, by increasing their substance in fuch a manner, that they may always have not only what is necessary for themselves, but likewise sufficient to affift fuch as are in want. III. We ought likewise seriously to consider the good effects which charity produces; it rejoices the faints, comforts the afflicted, engages them to praise God, edifies the church, and gives many people, feeing the liberality of Christians, occasion to glorify God's holy name, to pray for the charitable persons, and to imitate them; all which contributes greatly to promote the gospel. These considerations should stir us up to charity; and it is particularly the duty of those to whom God has given the good things of this life, to improve what St Paul fays in this and the fore. going chapter.

#### CHAP. X.

HE defign of St Paul in this chapter and the following, is to defend himself against those who endeavoured to leffen his authority, and to render him contemptible to the Corintbians. It is with this view he speaks, I. Of the spiritual power God had given him, and the use he made of it for the edification of the church. II. He then declares, that he was not full of pride, like those who spoke evil of him; that he did not pretend to meddle with other mens labours, nor take the honour of them to himself; but was contented with that proportion of grace which God had bestowed on him; and moreover, that he hoped, as he had first preached the gospel at Corinth, he should likewise go and preach it in distant countries, where it had not yet been preached.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE care that St Paul takes to justify and defend himself against such as blamed him, and what he fays concerning his authority, and the spiritual power God had given him, shews, that it is lawful to maintain one's innocence, provided it be done with moderation, and for a good end. It proves, particularly, that although the fervants of God ought to be entirely free from pride, yet they are allowed, and even obliged to affert the honour of their ministry; to make use of the authority they have received from Christ, agreeable to his intentions; refolutely withstanding all those who would obstruct the edification of the church, and having in view, not their own glory or interest, but the promoting God's kingdom, the removing every thing that may oppose the knowledge of him, and the engaging mens hearts to the obedience of Christ. We are also taught hereby, that Christians ought to reverence their pastors, and submit to their authonty, fince they likewife have their commission from Jesus Christ; and though they are much inferior to the apostles, yet the Lord has appointed them to rule his church. Laftly, The manner in which St Paul speaks of himself, and the remarks he makes upon the pride of those teachers who opposed him, should make us own, that humility is the character of the true ministers of Christ, that they ought to confine themselves within the bounds of their vocation, and the duties to which they are called; and that it is a great misfortune to the church, when its ministers are animated with a spirit of pride, presumption, envy and jealoufy; and when they occasion strife and divisions.

CHAP.

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## CHAP. XI.

I. C T Paul tells the Corintbians, that the great love he had for them, and his fear left they should be seduced by those who endeavoured to vilify him, compelled him to make mention, though against his will, of the gifts and graces wherewith God had enriched him, and of what he had done for them, II. He puts them in mind, that he had preached the gospel to them without receiving any thing from them; which was more than the false apostles could fay: that so he might not give them the least occasion against him. III. He shews, that he might boast of his superiority over those false apostles, who were Jews, on account of his great labours and fufferings, of which he gives us here a very remarkable catalogue.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE may observe in general in this chapter that St Paul maintains the honour of his apostleship, but does it in a very humble manner; and that though he speaks to his own praise, yet his manner of doing it sufficiently shews that he was forced to it. From hence we may conclude, I. That we ought always to speak of ourselves with great modefty; that modefty and humility ought particularly to be found in the ministers of Jesus Christ; but that they may nevertheless affert their own innocency; and the honour of their ministry, when it is neceffary for public edification. II. St Paul's fear lest the Corinibians should suffer themselves to be drawn afide from the purity and fimplicity of the gospel by false teachers, and his observing that the ministers of Satan transform themselves into angels of light, is a warning to Christians to be up-

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on their guard, and carefully to diffinguish doctrines and the propagators of them, and not fuffer themselves to be surprized by the false appearances of piety and zeal. III. We have feen that St Paul would receive no stipend from the Carinthians, though he loved them, and was beloved by them; this he did to take away every pretence from those who fought occasion to render his conduct suspected. and to shew that he was not like the false apostles, who railed at him, and were themselves mercenary. This is an example of zeal, prudence, and difinterestedness, which ought to be imitated by all pastors, and adds great weight to their ministry, and to all their offices, IV. We fould feriously attend to the account which the apostle here gives of his, great fufferings, and of the many dangers and perfecutions he had been exposed to, and from which God had delivered him. This is a noble proof of his zeal and fincerity, and of the truth of the doctrine he preached; it likewise shews, that Christians ought not to be terrified at afflictions, especially the ministers of Jesus Christ. Lastly, St Paul. informs us, that besides the sufferings he endured in his own person, he was continually in care for the churches; and that no evil could befal them, but what afflicted, and as it were confumed him. is the spirit of all true pastors in the duties of the ministry; the care of fouls, and the several wants of the people, engage their attention and their concern night and day, and they are more earnest in promoting the edification of the church, than in any other thing.

#### CHAP. XII.

I. S T Paul continues to speak of the advantages that distinguished him from other ministers; relates

relates how he was caught up to heaven; but does it in an exceeding humble and modest manner; by which it appears, he would not have mentioned it. if he had not been as it were forced to it. II. After this he tells the Corintbians he would shortly come to them; and as he had not been, fo neither would he now be burdenfome to them; he expresses a most tender regard for them, declaring he would not have writ to them as he did, but for their edification, and that he might not be obliged to use them with severity when he came to Corinth.

#### REFLECTIONS.

ST Paul's being caught up into heaven, men-tioned in this chapter, was a glorious privilege of this apostle, demonstrating the divinity of his vocation, and at the fame time, that there is a glorious and immortal life prepared for the faithful in heaven, The way in which St Paul relates this matter, and the excuses he makes in giving the relation of it, shew, that we may be allowed to speak of the favours God has bestowed on us; but that we must not do it unless it be necessary for the glory of God, and always in an humble fense of our own unworthiness, but by no means in a way of boasting or extolling ourselves. The apostle says, God had put a thorn in his flesh, that he might not be puffed up on account of the revelations he had had when he was caught up into paradife; and that a bad angel did, by the divine permission, cause him to feel very sensible pains in his body; this teaches us, that we are in danger of growing proud when we enjoy any confiderable advantage; and that it is necessary God should visit even the best of men with afflictions, to mortify them and keep them humble. We have feen, that though St Paul prayed earnestly to be delivered

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from this affliction, yet the Lord did not answer his request, and faid unto him, My grace is sufficient for thee. God never fails to grant those who ask of him those things which are necessary for the good of the foul, and to obtain falvation; but he does not always hear the prayers in which we beg to be delivered from bodily evils; but his grace, which enables us to bear them, ought to fatisfy us; and he leaves us exposed to fufferings, to the end we may become more fenfible of his strength in our weakness. Lastly, St Paul expresses the tender and paternal affection he bore to the Corintbians: he had nothing in view but their edification; he was ready to lay down his life for them; and was afraid he must be forced to use with feverity those who had not repented. Such are the fentiments of all faithful paftors; they have a tender affection for their people, devote themselves wholly to their fervice, and it is always matter of grief to them to be forced to use the severity of ecclefiaftical censures against scandalous and incorrigible finners.

## CHAP. XIII.

I. THE apostle acquaints the Corintbians again, that he designed to visit them; that he would not spare those who had not amended their lives; and since some among them questioned his authority, he would make them know by experience and by the effects, that as Jesus Christ, though he had been a weak man, now reigned by the power of God, so likewise he himself, though he was looked upon as a weak and despicable person, yet had received from the Lord the power and authority of an apostle of Christ. II. He exhorts them to examine and correct themselves, telling them he desired nothing so much as to find them in a good condition, that he might not

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not be obliged to deal rigorously with them, though they should call in question his character as an apostle. III: He concludes with a general exhortation to amendment and peace, and with hearty prayers for them.

## REFLECTIONS.

WE may observe in this chapter the zeal, and at the fame time the meekness, charity, and humility of St Paul. This apostle was resolved not to spare the incorrigible; yet he wished the Corinthians might amend, and not force him to use the power he had received from Christ as an apostle, In imitation of him, the ministers of Christ ought to be animated with a fpirit of charity and humility, and as much as they can to use meekness instead of feverity. Nevertheless, they ought not to spare hardened finners, when necessity requires it. It appears likewife from hence, that it is more laudable and pleafing to God, that Christians should do their duty willingly and of their own accord, than to be compelled thereto by the feverest censures of the church. St Paul concludes this epiftle, exhorting the Corintbians to spiritual joy, to repentance and peace, in these expressions: Finally, breebren, farewel; be ye perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you. This is the state which all Christians ought to aspire after, and be confirmed in more and more; and this too is the way to partake of God's love, of his peace, and of the effects of his mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The End of the Second Epistle of St PAUL to the CORINTHIANS.

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# GALATIANS.

#### ARGUMENT.

In the epiftle to the Galatians, which was writ about the year of our Lord fifty two, St Paul opposes those who taught, that in order to be saved, it was not enough to believe in Jesus Christ, but it was likewise necessary to be circumcised, and to observe the ceremonies of the law of Moses. The apostle proves against these people, that Christians are justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, without being obliged to the observation of those ceremonies. He afterwards exborts the Galatians to continue in that liberty; but warns them not to abuse it, by falling into licentiousness.

#### CHAP. I.

I. In this first chapter St Paul, after the salutation, reproves the Galatians for departing from the doctrine which he had taught them, which was the only doctrine they ought to receive.

II. He

II. He tells them in the next place, that he had received this doctrince by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and not from any man; upon which occasion, he puts them in mind how zealous he had been formerly for the ceremonies and traditions of the Jews: that he had even been a furious persecutor of the Christians, but that God had called him to the knowledge of the truth; and that immediately after his conversion, he had preached the gospel in several places, without consulting any man, or any apostle. St Paul speaks thus, to shew that he was called by Christ only, and not by St Peter, nor by any other person; and that he had the same authority as the rest of the apostles, which the false teachers would not allow.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter presents us with two principal reflections. I. That Christians ought never to depart from the true doctrine of the gospel, which was preached and committed to writing by the apostles; and that they ought to shun all those that would preach another doctrine, or propose any way to be saved but by faith in Christ Jesus. II. The account St Paul gives of his conversion, and what he says to prove that he had his authority from Jesus Christ, obliges us, on one hand, to receive his doctrine as divine, and to submit to it; and on the other, to acknowledge the mercy of the Lord, and the power of his grace, towards those who are in ignorance and error; of which we see an illustrious example in the conversion of St Paul, and his being called to the office of an apostle, who before that had been a declared enemy of the Christian religion.

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I. OT Paul, to support his calling and authority. and to shew that he was not inferior to any of the apostles, says, that not only his doctrine had been approved at Jerusalem by St Peter, St James, and St John; but even that he had rebuked St Peter, because, out of too great complaifance for the Jews, he was afraid to eat with those Gentiles who had embraced the gospel of Christ; which might have encouraged the Jews in their prejudices, and have given fome reason to believe that the Gentiles were bound to submit to the ceremonies of the law of Moses. II. He teaches next, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified only by faith in Jesus Christ; but shews, at the fame time, that this doctrine is fo far from countenancing loofeness of life, that on the contrary, faith in Christ crucified withdraws men from sin, and engages them to lead a most spiritual life.

#### REFLECTIONS.

WE have the two following observations to make upon this chapter: I. The authority, sincerity, and zeal, with which St Paul preached the pure doctrine of the gospel, so far as even to reprove St Peter for his too great complaisance to the Jews, which induced him to avoid all correspondence with the Gentiles. This should convince all Christians and especially the ministers of the gospel, that they ought always to act agreeable to their calling, and to walk with uprightness, according to the truth; and that we ought never to use any subterfuges, or the least dissimulation in matters of religion. II. St Paul establishes in this chapter the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ; but he teaches,

at the same time, and very expresly too, that this doctrine does by no means authorise men to live in sin; that, on the contrary, the true faith by which we are justified does necessarily destroy sin in us and cause us to live to God. This is what St Paul teaches us in these excellent words, which so well describe the condition and sentiments of a true believer in Jesus Christ; I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

## CHAP. III.

T Paul blames the Galatians for departing from that doctrine they had before embraced, and which teaches, that men are justified by faith in Christ without the works of the law; and to shew that that was the only true doctrine, he puts them in mind, I. That when they received it, God was pleased to communicate to them the miraculous gifts of the holy Ghost. II. He proves, by the example of Abraham, by the nature of the promises which were made to him and his posterity, and by the curse which the law denounces against those that should not perfectly fulfil it, that all men, even the Gentiles themfelves, must be justified by faith in Christ; from whence it follows, that those who pretended to be justified by the law, deprived themselves of these promises, and continued under the curse. III. He confirms the same, by observing that the law of Moses, which was not given till long after the promife that God had made to Abraham, could not difannul the said promise; but that God had given that law by the ministry of Moses, he being mediator between God and the people, to keep the Israelites in obedience,

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ence, until Christ should come; and to prepare men to receive that grace which was to render them all children of God, as well the Gentiles as the Jews; according to the promise that had been made to the patriarch Abraham.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

WE are to consider upon this chapter, I. That it is a great folly, and an extreme blindness, to turn aside from the truth after we have known it, and to end ill, after having begun well. II. That the wonderful gifts of the holy Ghoft, which were communicated to the first Christians, prove the divinity of the doctrine which they had embraced, and its excellency above the law. We fee, III. The proofs St Paul alledges, to shew that it is by faith in Christ that men are justified; which proofs are taken from the example of Abraham, from the promiles God had made him, from the curse which the law denounced against the Israelites, and from the time when the law was given. The manner of the apostle's reasoning upon this subject, shews that he had received from God extraordinary wisdom, and should convince us of the truth of his doctrine, fince we find fuch folid proofs of it in the law itself, and in the covenant which God had made with Abraham. IV. And lastly, The wisdom and goodness of God appear after a most remarkable manner, in his having given the law to restrain men from sin, and bring them to Christ, till the time should come, when he would receive into his covenant both Jews and Geniles. Let us from hence acknowledge, that fince we have the happiness to live in these times, and become the children and heirs of God, by faith in Christ, we are bound to render him a sincere and ilial obedience, and to discharge those duties to VOL. III. Z which

which we are engaged by the covenant of grace, whereinto we have been received.

#### CHAP. IV.

HIS chapter confifts of three parts. I. In the first, St Paul represents the difference between the condition of the Jews under the law, and the glorious state of Christians under the gospel, who have the happiness to be adopted the children of God; to shew how much the Galatians were to blame. in defiring to return to the yoke of the Mosaical ce-This he does by the comparison of a child under tutors and governors, with a fon who has his fortune in his own hands. II. He speaks of the great affection which he had for them, and of that which they formerly had conceived for him, and lets them know how uneafy he was on their account, III. He represents the difference there was between the covenant of the law, and that of the gospel, and between those who adhered to the one or the other, under the types of Ishmael and Isaac, the two sons of Abraham; one born according to the course of nature, of Hagar that was a fervant; and the other miraculously born, according to the promise of God, of Sarab, who was a free woman, and the wife of Abraham.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE general aim of this chapter is, I. To infiruct us in the difference there is between Jews and Christians, and to shew how happy we are who live under the gospel dispensation, and have been adopted of God to be his children, through faith in Christ. This is a doctrine which should excite in us a lively sense of our happiness, and great gratitude towards God; it ought likewise to inspire us with sentiments

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fentiments worthy the glory of our adoption, and especially induce us to live as the children of God, and to obey him willingly, and from a principle of II. As St Paul laboured with great earnestness to recover the purity of the faith among the Galatians, and prevent them from blending the ceremonies of the Mosaical law with the gospel, the ministers of Christ ought to endeavour to maintain religion in its purity, and to preserve their people from error and vice. And if the Galatians were to blame, to defire, after they had been freed by Jesus Christ from the Mosaical ceremonies, to be again under its yoke, Christians are not less to blame, who having the knowledge of the gospel, apply themselves to the vain and frivolous things of this world. III. The allegory of Sarab and Hagar, by which St Paul represented the different state of those who wanted to remain under the covenant of the law, and those who confined themselves to that of the gospel, may likewise be applied to Christians; and sets before us the difference between those who seek their happiness in the things of this world, and remain under the flavery of fin; and those who being freed from this bondage enjoy the glorious liberty of the fons of God. IV. We may observe in this chapter, that the Galatians had once had an extraordinary respect and love for St Paul; but that he was afraid they were changed with respect to him, though he loved them as fincerely as ever. Christians ought to esteem and cherish good and faithful pastors; but they who having had these sentiments, do not perseyere in them, are very much to blame, as well as those who conceive an aversion to them because they tell them the truth. As for the faithful fervants of God, they have always the most tender affection for the church of Christ; are continually in fear for those committed to their Z 2

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#### CHAP. V.

THERE are two parts in this chapter. I. In the first, St Paul exhorts the Galatians to continue in their Christian liberty, which, he fays, confifts in not being subject to circumcision, and to the ceremonies of the law of Moses. He tells them, that Christ would be of no advantage to them, if they retained these ceremonies; and advises them not to hearken to fuch as would fuggest to them other sentiments, and even not to endure them among them. II. He exhorts them not to abuse this liberty, nor to take occasion from thence to live licentiously, nor to follow the desires of the flesh. He recommends to them to love one another, and to live in peace, and gives a detail of the fins to which the flesh inclines men, and the fruits which the holy Ghost produces in those who are guided by him.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter is very instructive, and we ought carefully to remember the doctrine contained in it. St Paul explains here very clearly, how we are to understand what he has taught in this epistle; namely, that Christians are no longer under the law, and that the works of the law are not necessary to justification. That is to say, Christians are not obliged to observe circumcission, nor the other ceremonies of the law; but that they are under an indispensable obligation of leading a holy life. The apostle says, in the clearest and most positive manner, that justifying faith operates by love and good works;

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works; and that we ought not to take occasion from the doctrine of justification by faith, and our Christian liberty, to live in fin and licentiousness. He shews what a great difference there is between those that live according to the flesh, and those that are guided by the spirit of God; he specifies the sins of the slesh, the chief of which are impurity, sensuality, animofities, and divisions; and declares, that those who commit these sins shall never enjoy the kingdom of God. He shews, what are the effects which the spirit of God produces in true believers. Lastly, He fays, that those who belong to Christ, and in whom his spirit dwells, are distinguished by their following the dictates of that holy spirit, and by their crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts. All this shews, that the design of the gospel is to advance men in piety and holiness, and that this ought to be our chief study.

#### CHAP. VI.

I. ST Paul exhorts the Galatians to reprove with meekness those that fall into any fault, and to be animated towards them with a spirit of charity, humility and forbearance. He exhorts them, II. To provide for the subsistence of their teachers, and to exercise charity. III. He concludes with advising them once again, not to hearken to those that would oblige them to be circumcised, and makes a short recapitulation of his doctrine, and of this whole epistle.

#### REFLECTION'S.

ST Paul teaches us in this chapter, I. That those who have more knowledge than others, and are more advanced in piety, ought to bear with those who are not so well instructed, and reprove with

meekness those who sin through infirmity, consider. ing them always as brethren, and remembering that they themselves may likewise fall by temptation, and that every one is accountable to God for himfelf. and must bear his own burden. II. That Christians are obliged to provide for the maintenance of their pastors, and to do good to all men, but especially to the members of the church, and those who labour in its edification. III. That these are indispensable duties, and that God will judge us according to the manner of our discharging them; as St Paul shews, when he fays, Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for what soever a man soweth, that shall be also reap .-Laftly, It must be observed and carefully remembered, what St Paul fays at the end of this epiftle, and which is the fum of his whole doctrine; that God will not confider whether a man be a Jew or a Gentile, whether he be circumcifed or uncircumcifed; but that what he chiefly requires is, that we become new men and regenerated. This is the meaning of the following words: In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Amen.

The End of the Epifle of St Paul to the GALATIANS.

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# EPISTLE of St PAUL

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# ARGUMENT.

St. Paul writ this epiftle when he was a prisoner at Rome, about the year of our Lord sixty one, to the church of Ephesus, which he himself had founded; having made a considerable stay in that city, as appears from Acts xix. 20. This epistle consists of two parts. In the first, which is contained in the three first chapters, he represents to the Ephesians the savour which God had shewed them in receiving them into his covenant, who had been most of them Gentiles. In the second, he exhorts them to holiness, and instructs them in the principal duties of the Christian life; this is the design of the three last chapters.

# CHAP. I.

I. HE apostle returns thanks to God for having chosen the Ephesians to salvation, and for having given them the knowledge of Christ, and the gifts of the holy Ghost. II. He prays to the Lord to increase their knowledge Z 4 and

and their gifts, and that he would give them grace rightly to comprehend the excellency of their vocation, and the glory to which they were called in Jesus Christ.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THE beginning of this epiftle teaches us, I. That the greatest blessing God ever bestowed on men, was to give them the knowledge of Jesus Christ, to ordain the means of salvation, and call them to it by the gospel. II. That this great favour, and all the spiritual bleffings we enjoy, proceed wholly from the mercy of God, who has vouchsafed to elect us to falvation in his Son. III. That our hearts ought to be affected with fo valuable a bleffing, and that we should praise God continually for it, saying with St Paul: Bleffed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who bath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. IV. That the defign which God proposed to himself in thus choosing and calling us to the knowledge of himself, was to render us holy and unreproveable before him in love; and therefore that holiness ought to be our chief study, as it is the only means of attaining to glory. V. The prayers which St Paul offers up for the Ephefians, teach us, that it is not sufficient to have been once enlightened by the gospel, and to have had some sense of the love of God, but that we should always go on increasing in goodness, and labour to acquire daily more and more knowledge, and make a continual progress in holiness. VI. And lastly, Since all our happiness, and our increase in faith and holiness depend, as St Paul has affured us in strong terms, on our understanding rightly the excellence of the divine call, and of the heavenly treasure, we ought continually to meditate upon them, and beg of God

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to enlighten us, and strengthen us more and more by his grace, in this beautiful prayer of the apostle: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom, — that the eyes of our understanding being enlightned, we may know the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance which he has prepared for the saints. Amen.

#### CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apostle shews, I. That when all men, both Jews and Gentiles, were dead in their sins, God saved them by Jesus Christ; and he observes particularly, that they were indebted for this great benefit to the sole mercy of God, who had delivered them from a state of condemnation and corruption, and had given them a capacity of doing good works. II. He then puts the Epbesians in mind that they were formerly heathens, and excluded from the covenant of God; and of the favour God had shewn them, in removing the distinction which was between them and the Jews, and in uniting them so as to be but one people, and from thence-forwards to compose all of them together but one samily and one temple, holy to the Lord.

# REFLECTIONS.

WE are to consider here, I. That all men without exception were naturally in a state of corruption and condemnation, and dead in trespasses and sins; but that they are delivered from this dismals state, and raised to the hope of eternal life, through the great mercy of God, and by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. From whence it follows, that if we be saved, it is by the pure grace of God, and does not proceed from ourselves.

But this doctrine shews us likewise, that the design of God was to bring men off from their corruption, and to fanctify them; and that although we be not faved by works, yet God has created us in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he bath prepared for us to walk in, as St Paul fays. II. We fee in this chapter, that the distinction which there was formerly between the Jews and Gentiles, is abolished, since Christ has caused salvation to be preached unto the Gentiles, who were not in covenant with him, as well as to This doctrine should produce in us, who are descended from the heathens, a lively sense of the goodness of God, and make us remember, that we were in time passed Gentiles, - baving no bope, and without God in the world: but now are made nigh by the blood of Christ; so that we are no more strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the boushold of God. So great a favour obliges us to great gratitude, and to live in a manner fuitable to the glory of our condition, and to the happy state in which it has pleased God to place us. were covered to the warmer

# CHAP. III.

I. A FTER St Paul had taught us in the fore-going chapter, that the Gentiles who had embraced christianity composed but one people with the converted Jews, he tells the Ephesians that he was a prisoner at Rome for preaching this doctrine; the Jews having accused him, and delivered him to the Gentiles for no other reason. He observes, that the calling of the Gentiles had been formerly a hidden mystery and unknown to mankind; but that God had foretold it by the prophets, and revealed it to the apostles by the holy Ghost; and he exhorts the Ephesians not to be disheartned at the afflictions he endured, and which were so glorious and prositable

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able for them. II. He next befeeches God to confirm them in his calling, to strengthen them in faith, charity, and all kind of spiritual gifts, and give them the grace to know more and more the great and wonderful love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

# REFLECTIONS.

CT Paul teaches us in this chapter, that the calling of the Gentiles was a mystery unknown before the coming of Christ, but that the mystery had been revealed by the holy Ghost to the apostles. This should engage us to bless God with all our heart, not only because we live in a time in which this mystery is revealed, but particularly as we are of those nations which were formerly in the darkness of idolatry, but do now partake of the promises of God by the gospel, insomuch that we have at present a free access to God by his Son Jesus Christ. Let us continually meditate upon this great mercy, which God has exercised towards us; let us have a just sense of the value and extent of this wonderful love of our Lord, to the end we may be thereby more and more excited to love him, and aspire to the glory he has prepared for us; this is the effect which the doctrine laid down by the apostle in this chapter ought to produce in us; for which purpose let us beseech God with St Paul, to grant us, according to the riches of bis glory, to be strengthned with might, by his spirit, in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints the greatness of God's love in Christ Jesus, and may be filled with the abundance of God's grace. Amen.

#### CHAP. IV.

CT Paul here begins to exhort the Ephesians to the duties of a Christian life, recommending to them, before all things, peace and concord. To induce them to it, he shews, I. That all Christians enjoy in common the fame spiritual advantages; that the different gifts which Christ granted to men, after his ascension into heaven, and the different offices he had appointed in the church, did all tend to the mutual edification of the faithful; to unite them to each other, fo as to make but one body; to confirm them in truth and holinefs, and guide them by this means to perfection and falvation. II. After this the apostle exhorts the Epbesians not to live as they had done before their conversion to christianity, and as the heathens still did; but to lead a life entirely new, and conformable to the precepts of the gospel of Christ. He warns them particularly against the impurities and diffoluteness of the heathens, as well as lying, theft, wrath, obscene discourses, flander, and all bitterness and animosities.

# REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter we may gather, I. In general, that Christians ought to live in a manner fuitable to the vocation wherewith God has honoured them. II. That being all members of the fame body, having all of us the same faith, the same hope, the fame God, and the fame Saviour, we ought to live in peace and in perfect unity. III. That fince our Lord has distributed different gifts to men, and has particularly appointed, after his afcention, extraordinary ministers, such as the apostles; and ordinary ministers, such as pastors and teachers, we are bound to

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nary ound to to acknowledge the necessity and advantage of the ministry, to make a right use of it, and by its means to improve in faith, in piety, and charity. IV. That Christians should not be like wavering and fickle children, nor give credit to all kinds of doctrines, and to all that corrupt and defigning men may infinuate; but that they should be steady in their belief, and for that purpose adhere inviolably to the gospel, and to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which alone can lead them to perfection and eternal happiness. St Paul here teaches us, that the Christian religion calls us to holiness, and that those who have been instructed in the truth by Jesus Christ, are by no means allowed to live like the Gentiles, who were involved in ignorance, and for want of knowing God, abandoned themselves to all kinds of disorders; that the defign of the gospel is, that We should put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and that we should be renewed in our minds. and - put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true boliness. VI. The particular fins which St Paul condemns as altogether unworthy of Christians, are first, impurity and dissoluteness, which he represents as the reigning sin of the heathen; next, lying and deceiving, injustice and theft; idleness, lasciviousness and indecent discourse; which offend our neighbour, and grieve the Spirit of God; and lastly, anger, bitterness, and calumny. Christianity engages us to avoid all these sins; and to fludy purity, fincerity, justice, and meekness; that to we may bear the image of our heavenly Father, and that he may own us for the disciples of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

# CHAP. V.

In this chapter we see, I. Exhortations to charity and purity. St Paul, to dissuade the Ephesians, from impurity, in particular declares to them, that that sin would draw down upon men the wrath of God; and represents to them, that God had delivered them from the darkness of paganism, by enlightening them with the light of the gospel. II, He advises them to behave with prudence, to redeem the time, and to avoid excess of wine and profane mirth; and exhorts them to spiritual joy and thanks giving. III. He prescribes the duties of husbands and wives.

# REFLECTIONS.

IN E are to learn from hence, I. That the character of children of God, which we bear, obliges us to imitate him, especially in his love, and in his goodness, and to walk in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ, who so loved us as to give himself for us. II. That Christians cannot have too much horror for impurity; that this vice should not be so much as named among them; that they ought never to utter any free, foolish or indecent words, nor any thing contrary to modesty; but that all their discourses ought to be grave and edifying; and that those who transgress the laws of purity and chastity, and live in uncleanness, bring upon themselves the wrath of God, and will have no part in his kingdom. III. That the light of the gospel, which has shined upon us, delivering us from the darkness of paganism, does not allow us to imitate the heathens in their diforders, and that so far from partaking of other mens fins, we are rather to reprove them. IV. St Paul gives us a rule of prudence, advising us in all respects to govern ourselves with wisdom and caution; and to make a good

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a good use of time. V. He says, that intemperance and drunkenness are vices utterly unworthy of Christians; and that, instead of abandoning ourselves to fenfuality, and to carnal and profane pleafures, we should seek after that spiritual joy which the holy Ghost produces, and which excites us to edify one another, and to praise God continually in heart and mouth; giving thanks always for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lastly, The apostle, proceeding to particular duties. exhorts hufbands and wives to live together in perfeet harmony. The duty of husbands is to love their wives; and that of wives, to honour their husbands, and to be in subjection to them: the love which husbands owe to their wives, he represents by the love of Christ to his church; and the subjection which wives ought to be in to their husbands, by the church's dependance on Jesus Christ. This comparison made use of by St Paul, represents, in the strongest light, the necessity of these reciprocal duties between man and wife, and how fincere their union ought to be; which should convince us of the great importance of St Paul's instructions upon this fubject.

# CHAP. VI.

I. ST Paul lays down the duties of children and parents; of fervants and masters. II. He represents to the Ephesians, that fince they were not only to fight against weak men, but likewise against all that is powerful in the world, and even against their spiritual enemies, the evil angels; they ought to be clothed and armed with faith, righteousness, and hope, and make use of the word of God and prayer, that they may resist and overcome their enemies. III. He concludes this epistle, by recommending

mending himself to the prayers of the Ephesians, and likewise by praying for them.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE duties here prescribed are very important. and highly necessary, not only to the good of families, and of civil fociety, but also for the edification of the church. The first of these duties relates to children, who are obliged, by the command of God, as well as the law of nature, to obey their fathers and mothers, according to the will of the Lord; and that parents, on the other hand, are bound to take care of their children, especially to educate them in the fear of God, and in a Christian manner, giving them all necessary instructions, adding to these reproof and correction, when they stand in need of them. As for fervants, their condition engages them to obey their masters, and to serve them faithfully, whether absent or present. On the other hand, masters should treat their domestics with gentleness and equity; remembering that there is a Master in heaven, to whom they are subject as well as their servants, and who has no respect of persons. And let it be considered, that if masters were to have this just regard for their fervants, who in those times were mostly Gentiles, and were slaves besides; masters are now much more obliged to perform the same duties, fince their fervants are free persons, and Christians, as well as themselves. The second part of this chapter engages us to remember, I. That being in this life exposed to divers dangers, but especially to our spiritual enemies, and to the temptations with which we are furrounded, we ought to stand upon our guard, to relift those enemies, and to secure ourselves from their snares. That for this purpose, we ought always to confirm and strengthen ourselves in faith, in truth, and in hope; to read and meditate

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tate continually upon the word of God, and to pray with zeal and perseverance. What is said about the end of this epistle, teaches us, that Christians are obliged, by the love they owe to Jesus Christ, and for their own interest, to pray for those who preach the word of God, and who labour to promote his kingdom; and that pastors, on their part, ought likewise to pray for the churches of Christ, and to put up prayers in behalf of all Christians, as St Paul did for the Epbesians; namely, that peace may be to the bretbren, and love, with faith from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ; that grace may be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

The End of the Epiftle of St P A U L to the EPHESIANS.



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# PHILIPPIANS

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## ARGUMENT.

St Paul wrote this epiftle, as well as the former, while be was a prisoner at Rome, about the year of Christ fixty one, to thank the Christians of the city of Philippi, for the relief they had fent him to Rome by Epaphroditus, one of their pastors. He informs them of his condition, and gives them several exhortations.

# CHAP. I.

I. T Paul begins with thanksgivings, and with prayers for the confirmation of the Philippians in faith and holinefs. II. He tells them, that his imprisonment had contributed towards promoting the gospel in the city of Rome. III. He declares he was disposed to glorify Christ, whether by life or death, and that he only defired to live for the advantage of the church. IV. He exhorts the Philippians to a behaviour worthy of the gospel, and to patience in afflictions. RE-

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# REFLECTION'S after reading the chapter.

I. WE see at the entrance of this epistle, St Paul's great zeal and perfect charity, in the prayers which he offers up to God for the Pbilippians, and in the proofs he gives them of his love and joy at hearing of their stedfastness in the faith. This is a lesson to pastors, to love their flocks with a cordial affection in Christ Jesus, and to pray to God incessantly for the entire sanctification of the faithful. II. We ought to admire the ways of God's providence, who was pleafed that St Paul should be imprisoned at Rome, that he might have an opportunity to preach the gospel there, and that his fufferings might ferve to excite the zeal of many, who were before afraid to make an open profession of the gospel. This is one of those examples which prove that what the enemies of the truth do to destroy it, helps often to spread it the more. III. We see that though there were people who preached the gospel out of envy and jealousy against St Paul, yet he rejoiced because the gospel was thereby promoted. God fometimes makes use even of persons who do not act upon a good principle, to perform his work; but however it be done, those who, like St Paul, are animated with a true zeal, are pleased with it, even though it be a prejudice to themselves. IV. The sentiments of this apostle concerning life and death, are fuch as all true Chriftians ought to entertain; who should always be ready both to live and to die for the glory of God; their defire is to leave the world, that they may be with the Lord; and if they wish to live, it is only that they may be useful to the church, and to their neighbours. Finally, This passage of the epistle to the Philippians, where St Paul says, he desired to leave this world to be with the Lord, proves clear-A a 2

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ly, that the faithful are happy and with the Lord after their death, in expectation of the refurrection: for if it was not fo, this apostle would have had no reason to desire death rather than life. V. The close of this chapter shews, that the duty of all Christians is, to behave in a manner worthy of the gospel, and not to be staggered at afflictions, especially when they undergo them for the fake of Christ,

# CHAP. II.

I. OT Paul exhorts the Philippians very affection nately to concord and humility. And to this end he proposes the example of Christ's humiliation, and of the glory to which he was afterwards exalt. ed. And represents to them, that this is an inducement to work out their falvation with humility and perseverance. II. He exhorts them to live in peace, and by a pure and innocent behaviour to edify the heathens among whom they lived; and he affures them, he would suffer death with joy, if it were ne ceffary for the confirmation of their faith. III. He promises to send Timothy to them, whose zeal and taithfulness he praises. He likewise recommends to them Epaphroditus, one of their pastors, who was returning to them after recovering from a great fickness.

# REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from hence, I. That one of the most important duties of Christians, is true charity that they should live together in perfect unity, and in a spirit of humility, and that they should pro mote the interests of others as well as their own II. St Paul fets before our eyes the profound humithey of liation of Jesus Christ, who, though he was equa

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to God, abased himself, even to the death of the crofs, and who by his obedience and fufferings was exalted to supreme glory. The apostle propoles this example, to teach us, that if we have the same sentiments of humility as our Saviour had, we shall likewife attain to glory. III. This ferious exhortation, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, hould inspire us all with a great zeal, to labour continually with profound humility in the work of our falvation; making use for that purpose of the means which God affords us, among which one of the most effectual is, to have recourse to him by prayer, forasmuch as it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do if his good pleasure. IV. This chapter further teaches us, that Christians ought to avoid quarrels and disputes, and distinguish themselves by an unblameable behaviour, so that they may shine like burning lights in a crooked and perverse generation. V. St Paul's declaration, that he was ready to facrifice his blood and his life with pleasure, for the edification of the Philippians, shews, that the true ministers of Christ are entirely devoted to the service of God and of his church; that this is the end of all their labours; and that when it is necessary to lose even their lives for the advancement of the falvation of men, they ought to lay them down with gladness. VI. The testimony which the apostle gives of the sincerity and great zeal of Timothy; what he says of Epaphroditus, of his fickness and recovery, and the earnest manner in which he recommends him to the Philippians, shews, that true pastors, who only seek e mot the interests of Christ, and discharge their function narity with zeal and fincerity, deferve all the love and all y, and the esteem of Christians; that the lives and prefervald pro r own fion of fuch ought to be very dear to the church; that they ought to be received with all demonstrations of humi

of joy, and to be highly esteemed by their people,

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who should submit to their instructions and exhortations.

#### CHAP. III.

I. C T Paul advises the Philippians not to hearken to false teachers, who preached up the observation of circumcision, and boasted of the external advantages that diffinguished the Jews from other nations. II. He shews by his example, that all those advantages which he had been in possession of when he lived in Judaism, were unprofitable, and even prejudicial to falvation; and he fays, that it was for that reason he had renounced them, to adhere to Christ alone; and that he continually endeavoured to advance more and more in the knowledge of our Lord, and to attain to perfection and glory, by an entire conformity to his fufferings and refurrection. III. He exhorts the Philippians to come into his fentiments, and to avoid their false teachers, whose character he describes, faying, that they were carnal men; whereas true Christians are spiritual, and do only aim at heaven.

# REFLECTIONS.

Chapter, that as St Paul exhorted the Philippians to beware of false teachers, who endeavoured to enslave them to the ceremonies of the law of Moses, it is very necessary that Christians should fortify themselves against error, and all that is contrary to the purity of faith. Besides which, we may gather from this chapter these four distinguishing marks of true Christians. I. The first is, that they have the same opinion of the things of the world, as St Paul had of the external advantages he possessed when he was a Jew; that is to say, that

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they fet no value upon those things in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ their Lord; and that they consider them even as hurtful. when they hinder them from following their heavenly calling. II. The second character of true Christians is, that, in imitation of St Paul, they aim at perfection, feeking always to become more and more like unto their Saviour, leaving the things which are behind them, advancing towards those before them, and by continual endeavours pressing to the mark and prize of their calling in Christ Jesus. The third character of the faithful is, that being united all in one common faith, and the belief of the fame effential truths, they live in peace; and if they should have different sentiments in matters of little importance, their difference of opinion will not cause a division and separation among them. IV. The last character St Paul gives of the true disciples of our Lord is, that whereas carnal men do only love the things of the world, and have no other God but their belly; true Christians live after a spiritual and a heavenly manner, behaving themselves as those whose country is heaven, from whence they expect their Lord and Saviour, who will come from thence to raise them up, and to receive them into the glory of his kingdom.

# CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. The first contains exhortations to perseverance, unity, and spiritual joy; to considence in God, and to a holy life. II. In the second, St Paul thanks the Philippians for the contributions they had tent him for his subsistence in prison; and prays for them.

## REFLECTIONS.

THE first part of this chapter instructs us in these five duties. I. The first is, to persevere continually in the purity of faith, and in piety. II. The apostle's exhortation to Eucdias and Syntyche, two Christian women, who, without doubt, differed in their opinion upon some article of religion, to live in peace, shews, that Christians ought to live in unity, to endeavour to be of one mind in matters of faith, and to bear with each other, if they do not in every respect think alike. III. The third duty, is to rejoice always in God with a spiritual joy. IV. The fourth, not to be full of the cares of this life, but to have recourse to God by prayer in all our wants, and to trust in his providence. V. The fifth duty is of a very great extent; it is to adhere constantly to all things that are honest, just, pure, holy, virtuous, and praise-worthy. There may be two reflections made upon the second part of this chapter. I. First, St Paul teaches us, by his example, to be contented in whatever state or condition we find ourselves, whether we be in poverty, or whether we be in plenty. II. Secondly, The thanks which this apostle returns the Philippians for what they had fent to him at Rome, to support him when a prisoner, express great disinterestedness, and at the fame time no less gratitude; and the prayers he offers to God for them, upon that occasion, teach us, that it is a work very agreeable to God, to affift fuch as are in want, and particularly his faithful fervants, and those that suffer for the gospel; that these works of charity rejoice and comfort good men, and that they are facrifices of a fweet favour, which God accepts, and rewards according to the riches of his grace, with glory in Jesus Christ.

The End of the Epiftle of St Paul to the PHILIPPIANS.

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# EPISTLE of St PAUL

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# TOTHE

# COLOSSIANS.

### ARGUMENT.

This is likewise an epistle which St Paul writ whilst he was a prisoner at Rome the first time, in the year of our Lord sixty-one. The design of it is to exhort the Colossians not to suffer themselves to be seduced by certain false teachers, who would persuade them to join the ceremonies of the law, and the notions of the heathen philosophers, to the Christian saith. This is the subject of the two sirst chapters. In the two last, he prescribes the principal duties of piety and holiness.

## CHAP. I.

HIS chapter consists of two parts. I. St Paul praises God that the gospel had been preached to the Colossians by Epaphras, and had great success among them; and he beseeches feeches the Lord to fill them more and more with the knowledge of his will, and with all kind of spiritual gists. II. The apostle represents Christ as the only author of salvation; as him who created the angels and all other creatures; and by whom all men, the Gentiles in particular, have been perfectly reconciled to God. St Paul speaks thus to the Colossians, to convince them that the doctrine of Christ was sufficient to bring men to perfection and salvation, without any necessity of the law of Moses, or any other doctrines. III. Lastly, He assures them that the sufferings which he endured, ought not to stagger them in the profession of the gospel; and that the end of his preaching was to bring the Gentiles and all men to salvation.

# REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

I. THE praises and thanksgivings with which St Paul begins this epiftle, teach us, that God has granted us the greatest bleffing in causing his gospel to be preached among us, and that we ought to praise him continually for it; but this bleffing can be of no use to us, unless, as St Paul exhorted the Coloffians, we walk worthy of the Lord, doing that which is well pleasing in his fight, and being fruitful in every good work. II. The prayers St Paul joins to these thanksgivings, teach us, that it is not enough to have arrived at some degree of truth and holiness, but that we ought to aim at perfection, and to beg of God that he would continually increase his knowledge, and the gifts of his spirit in us. These prayers of the apostle instruct us farther, that the purpose for which God grants us this knowledge and these gifts, is to frame our minds to holiness, to bring us to perfection and glory, by a continual increase of his grace. We

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We see in the second part of this chapter, that Christ is the creator of all things, that to know him is the most perfect and useful knowledge, and that by him God has been pleased to reconcile all men to himself. What we are to gather from hence is, that we are to seek for salvation in Christ Jesus alone, by continually persevering in faith and obedience to the gospel, and that no temptation whatever should be able to turn us away from it.

### CHAP. II.

I. T Paul testifies to the Colossians, that his fear lest they should suffer themselves to be drawn away by those who endeavoured to introduce the fubtilties of philosophy, and the traditions of the Jews into the Christian religion, obliged him to make use of these exhortations. II. For this reason he continues to represent to them, that in Christ Jefus every thing was found that was necessary to justify and fanctify men; and consequently, that they ought not to give heed to philosophy, no more than to the ceremonies of the Jews, fince they were useless, and had been abolished by the death of III. He concludes from thence, that Chriftians are no longer bound to observe these ceremonies, and that they ought not to liften to those who would confine them to a distinction of meats and days, and introduce the worship of angels, and several vain and superstitious practices.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE great zeal St Paul shews at the beginning of this chapter for the Colossians, and his apprehensions of their being seduced by false teachers, proves,

proves, that the rulers of the church, and Christians in general, ought carefully to guard against error, and to beware that they be not diverted from the pure faith by fubtilties, or doctrines invented by men. II. We fee here, that the true way to prevent being seduced, is to adhere to Christ alone, and to his gospel, and to look upon him as one that has perfectly atoned for our fins; from whom alone all knowledge and holiness proceed, and who will undoubtedly fave those who truly believe in him. It ought to be observed, that when St Paul says, that Christ has, by his death, taken away the obligation that was against us, and which consisted in the legal ordinances, having entirely abolished them, this only relates to circumcifion, and the ceremonies which God had formerly prescribed to the Jews; but that he has not freed us from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God; that, on the contrary, he died to enable us to observe them the better, and to communicate his grace to us after a much more perfect manner than the Mosaical ceremonies were able to do. Lastly, We learn from this chapter, that it is a very dangerous thing to introduce into religion voluntary will-worship, and the inventions of men, and vain and superstitious customs, though they even carry with them some appearance of devotion; but that we should always confine ourfelves to the gospel, and adhere to that true and solid piety which is there prescribed, and which consists in a pure faith, and in a renunciation of the world, and of the lusts of the flesh.

# CHAP. III.

I. S T Paul shews, that faith in Christ raised from the dead, engages Christians to seek for the things

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things of heaven, and to renounce those sins that were common among the Gentiles, and particularly uncleanness. II. He exhorts them next, to kindness, humility, mutual forgiveness, charity, peace, and to glorify God by their discourses, by their praises, and by their whole behaviour. III. He shews lastly, the duties of wives and husbands, of children and parents, of servants and masters.

### REFLECTIONS.

N this chapter St Paul shews, that those who truly believe that Christ is risen, and that he lits on the right hand of God, will not fet their hearts upon worldly things, but turn their thoughts to heaven, and to that life which is prepared for us in Christ II. The apostle informs us, that of the fins which Christianity obliges us to renounce, one, which particularly exposes men to the wrath of God, is impurity and all uncleanness, whether of thought, word, or deed; next he forbids all kind of wrath, calumny, unkind expressions, lying, and, in general, all the vices of the old man, that is, of corrupt na-He points out the virtues and principal duties of the Christian life; which are, to abound in mercy, kindness, meekness, and humility; to bear with, and pardon one another, to have a fincere love for our neighbour, to edify one another by good discourses, to be continually rendering thanks to God our father, and so to behave ourselves, that all our words, and all our actions, may tend to his glory. III. To these general duties St Paul adds the particular ones, to which wives and husbands, children and parents, fervants and mafters, are mutually obliged; commanding wives to fubmit to their hufbands, hufbands to love their wives; children to obey their parents, and tathers to treat their children with mildness; servants

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to obey their masters, and be faithful to them, from a principal of conscience, and masters to be just and equitable to their fervants. The repetition here made of these particular duties, which the apostle had before mentioned in the epiftle to the Ephefians, is an argument of the great importance of them. Let us therefore observe these inviolably, and all the other precepts contained in this chapter; which are fo just, and so worthy of the religion we profess : and discharge all the duties required of us, whether in our general calling, as Christians, or in the particular state and condition in which God has placed us.

# CHAP. IV.

I. HE apostle exhorts the Colossians to persevere in prayer, and to behave wifely, and to speak with prudence and meekness upon all occafions. II. He recommends Tychicus and Onesimus, whom he fent to them; and concludes his epiftle by falutations and fome advices.

# REFLECTIONS.

HE first duty which St Paul recommends in this chapter, is to pray continually; to perfevere in that holy exercise, and in thanksgivings; and, particularly, to pray for the ministers of Jesus Christ, that they may preach the gospel as it ought to be preached. II. The fecond duty is, to be very prudent, and to redeem the time, especially when we have to do with perfons who have an aversion to truth and holiness; to speak always with wisdom and gentleness, and in such a manner, as tends most to the edification of those that hear us, and to avoid every m

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void very every thing that may expose us to danger, without necessity, or give offence to any one. Lastly, The good character St Paul gives of Tycbicus, Onesimus, Mark, Jesus, Epaphras, and St Luke, who were all of them excellent servants of God, and the manner in which he recommends them to the Colossians, should convince all Christians, that good ministers, who behave worthy of their office, are a very valuable blessing, and that we ought to love them sincerely, and that they should be received by the church with all kind of respect and affection, as they, on their part, ought to grow more and more zealous, and take heed of the administration which they have received of the Lord, that they may faithfully discharge it.

The End of the Epiftle of St Paul to the Colossians.

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# THESSALONIANS.

### ARGUMENT.

This epistle, which is the oldest of St Paul's epistles, was wrote in the fifty first year of Christ. In the three first chapters, the apostle expresses his great joy to hear of the happy state of the Thessalonians, and their steadiness in persecutions. He likewise informs them what had happened to him, what sentiments he had had, and what he still had for them. In the swo last he exhorts them to piety and holiness.

# CHAP. I.

S T Paul praises God, I. That the Thessalonians had received the gospel which he had preached to them with faith and zeal. And, II. That their church was a pattern to all the churches of Macedonia and Achaia.

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# REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

IT is to be observed in general, on this epistle, that there is no church which St Paul speaks so advantageously of, and commends so much, as the church of Thessalonica. At the entrance of the epistle he expresses the greatest joy, and renders most hearty thanks to God for the happy state of the Thessalonians; calling to remembrance the manner in which they received his preaching, their faith, charity and patience; which shews, that the glory of any church, and what affords the greatest joy and comfort to the faithful fervants of God, is to fee the gospel bring forth fruit, and faith and every virtue flourish and abound in it. The church of Thessalonica, which was formerly an example in this respect to the rest, may be still proposed for a pattern to all Christian churches. We should likewise apply to ourselves what St Paul faid to the Theffalonians, touching their conversion to the Christian religion; since, like them, we also, through the mercy of God, have been delivered from the darkness of heathenism, and are turned from idols. to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from beaven, whom he raised from the dead, even JESUS, which delivers us from the wrath to come.

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# CHAP. II.

OT Paul does three things in this chapter. I. He puts the Thessalonians in mind, that he had preached the gospel to them with sincerity, and without any view of interest; and, that he might not be burdensome to them, he had supported himless by his own labour; and that he had always exported them to live to the honour of that God, who Vol. III. B b

had called them to his glory. II. He bleffes God, that his ministry had been effectual among them, and that they had endured, with so much constancy, the perfecutions which at that time were every where raised against the Christians by the Jews, whose hatred he himself had experienced during his stay at Thessalonica, finding them the bitterest enemies of the gospel. III. He shews the desire he had to see the Thessalonians, and his ardent affection towards them.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE ministers of the gospel should learn by St Paul's example, to exercise their office with integrity; to preach the pure word of God without any motives of interest or vainglory; to make appear in all their actions, an entire difinterestedness, and a perfect meekness; to behave themselves pioully and without reproach, and continually to exhort Christians to a conduct worthy of God, who calls them to his kingdom and to his glory. II. We fee in this chapter, that the duty of those to whom the pure word of God is preached, is to receive itas the Thessalonians did, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, and not to be discouraged a the opposition and the persecutions which they might be exposed to; but to bear them with the same constancy as St Paul and the Thessalonians endured those which the Jews raised against them. III. St Pan complains, that the Jews were the avowed enemie of the gospel, that they prevented, as much as the could, its progress among the heathens, and that by how the this means they filled up the measure of their in quities, and drew down the divine vengeance more true parand more upon them. We have great reason to de the Lor plore the obstinacy of the Jews, who continue to the makes to day in the same infidelity, feeling the effects of God of their

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wrath, and to pray for their conversion. We fee moreover that there have been in all times persons that oppose Christ's kingdom, and therefore we must not be furprised, if we find the like among Christians. Lastly, We see in this chapter, the most extraordinary and most affecting marks of St Paul's love and esteem for the Thessalonians. Pastors, who are animated with the same spirit as this holy apostle, have the most tender affection for those committed to their charge; there is no joy comparable to that which they feel when they fee the fruit of their ministry; and as the faithful are all their hope, and all their joy in this world, they will also be their crown of glory at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jefus Christ.

#### CHAP. III.

THE apostle speaks in this chapter, I. Of the care he took to fend Timothy from Athens to Theffalonica, to be informed of the condition of the Thessalonians, and to strengthen them. II. Of the great comfort he received when Timothy, at his return, brought him the good news of their remembrance of him, and their perseverance in the faith; on which occasion he prays very earnestly for them.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT is chiefly to be observed here, is, that St Paul, in his great love for the Theffalonians, was not eafy till he had fent Timothy to know how they did, and to confirm them in the faith. eir in This behaviour of St Paul, shews the great concern true pastors have for their flocks. Their love for to do the Lord Jesus, and for those who hear his voice, to the makes them be continually employed in the supply of God of their wants, and in providing for their edification

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by all possible means. II. The extraordinary com. fort St Paul felt, at being informed by Timothy of the perseverance and happy state of the Thessalonians, and the thanks he renders to God on this account, are expressed in such strong terms, as denote the most lively sense of joy, tenderness and esteem. This apostle assures them, he could not sufficiently bless the Lord, for that excess of joy he felt when he thought on them. Nothing more fenfibly affects the faithful servants of Jesus Christ, nor gives them greater pleafure, than when they fee the faith and piety of those over whom God has appointed them; this being always the principal subject of their prayers and thanksgivings. All Christians should have the fame fentiments, and labour for the fame end, with their utmost zeal, for the consolation of their spiritual guides, as well as for the glory of God and their own falvation. This is expressed in this prayer of St Paul: The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, to the end he may stablish your bearts unblameable in boliness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Chris with all his saints.

# CHAP. IV.

THERE are two things to be observed in this chapter: I. Exhortations to a holy life, and especially to chastity and charity. II. St Paul shews that Christians ought not to grieve excessively for the dead; and, in this view, he speaks of what shall happen both to the dead and those which shall be alive at the last day, and how they shall be taken up into heaven.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

ST Paul teaches us in this chapter, I. That the chief duty of Christians is, to behave themselves in fuch a manner as is agreeable to God; to keep the commandments we have received from the Lord, and to abound more and more in piety. II. St Paul, as usual, warns the Thessalonians in very clear and frong terms against impurity, because this vice was very common among the heathens, especially in great cities, fuch as Theffalonica. He fays, that the will of God is, that we should be holy; that we should avoid impurity and evil concupiscence; that every one should know how to keep his body in chaftity; that no body ought to violate the rules of modesty, of charity, and of justice, to gratify the inordinate defires of the flesh; and, that God is the avenger of those sins, since he has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness. III. St Paul teaches us two things concerning charity; one is, that true Christians do not need to be exhorted to charity, fince they are taught by God to love one another, and to affift their brethren; and the other, that in order to exercise charity, every one ought to keep within the bounds of his calling, to apply himfelf to his own business, and to avoid idleness and curiofity, which is a way of life inconfistent with piety and christianity. Lastly, We see in this chapter, that we ought not to afflict ourselves for the dead, as men without hope, fince we know that those who die in the Lord, shall rise again, and be carried up into heaven upon the clouds to meet the Lord, together with those who shall be then alive. This doctrine ought to comfort us for the death of such perions as are dear to us, when we have realon to believe them in the number of the faithful; to confirm B b 3 ourfelves

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ourselves against the fear of death, and to excite us to live to the Lord, to the end, that dying likewise in him, we may be raised again one day, to be eternally united to him in the heavenly glory.

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I. ST Paul having, at the end of the preceeding chapter, spoke of Christ's coming, says, that the time of his coming was unknown and uncertain; and exhorts Christians to prepare themselves for it by sobriety and watchfulness. II. He prescribes to the Tbessalans several duties of piety. III. He concludes his epistle, by praying God for their fanctification, and recommending himself to their prayers.

# REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter teaches us, I. That the day of the Lord will come in a very sudden manner, furprising men when they least expect it; that it will be a day of terror for those who walk in darkness, and give themselves up to the works of the slesh; but that that day will be full of comfort to believers; and that therefore the way not to be surprised by it, is to prepare ourselves for it by a sober and mortified life, by faith, by the practice of charity, and all kind of good works. St Paul next prescribes several particular duties, fuch as, first, the edifying and exhorting one another by good discourses. If. He speaks in the strongest terms of the respect and love due to the paftors and governors of the church, for their work's fake. III. He commands us to live in peace one with another; advising, comforting, and forbearing each other; and avoiding revenge. He adds

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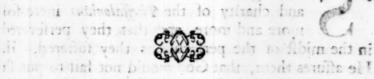
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adds feveral fentences, which are fo many excellent precepts; fuch as to rejoice always with foiritual joy; to pray continually; to give thanks to God in all things; not to quench the gifts of the spirit, either in others, or in ourselves; to try all things, and hold fast that which is good; and, to avoid all appearance of evil. These are so many holy rules which we should never lose fight of, and which we should endeavour to put in practice; adding always prayer to our endeavours, and with St Paul, befeeching God to fantify intirely our whole spirit, and foul, and body, and preserve them blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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# SECOND EPISTLE of St PAUL

TOTHE

# THESSALONIANS.

### ARGUMENT.

This epistle was wrote a little after the former, about the year of Christ fifty two. It consists of three chapters. In the first, St Paul encourages the Thessalonians against Persecution. In the second, He corrects their notions concerning the approach of the last day. And in the third, He exhorts them to live according to the purity of the gospel.

# CHAP. I.

I. ST Paul gives thanks to God, that the faith and charity of the Thessalonians increased more and more, and that they persevered in the midst of the persecutions they suffered. II. He assures them, that God would not fail to punish persecutors, and those who did not obey the gospel, and that he would crown the faithful with everlasting glory at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. III. He beseeches God to confirm the Thessalonians, and to make them increase in faith and holiness.

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REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

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I. IX/E see in this epistle, that the church of Thessalonica, which St Paul had so much commended in the former epiftle, did more and more abound in faith, charity, and the gifts of the holy: Ghost; that St Paul's affection for this church was, continually encreasing, and was the subject of his joy and thanksgivings. It is the great glory of the church to be continually improving, and the greatest fatisfaction to its ministers to be able to say of the people committed to their charge, what St Paul testifies of the faithful of Thessalonica. II. This chapter teaches us, that Christians, far from being discouraged by those afflictions to which the profession of the gospel exposes them, are thereby better qualified to enter into the kingdom of God; that fuch afflictions are a proof of his righteous judgment, and that the Lord will come to give reft and eafe to fuch as have been exposed to them; and to exercise vengeance against persecutors, and all those who obey not the gospel of Christ. This doctrine ought to produce in us patience, and even joy in our afflictions; a lively fense and dread of the judgment of God, and a constant endeavour to please him. The prayer St Paul makes for the confirmation of the Thessalonians in faith and the grace of God, shews that we must persevere ingoodness, and aim more and more at perfection. This should be our chief care and the subject of our prayers, as St Paul exhorts us in the following words: We pray always for you, that our God would render you worthy of his calling, and fulfil in you all the good pleafure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified by you, and you by bim, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

# CHAP. II.

I. ST Paul, that he might undeceive the Thessalo.

mians, in the opinion some had entertained, that the day of the Lord which he had been speaking of would soon come, foretels, that before the coming of that day, there would be an apostasy in the church, occasioned by the man of sin, and the son of perdition. II. He describes his characters, the place, the time, the manner of his manifestation, the progress he would make, and lastly, his destruction. The apostle adds exhortations and prayers in behalf of the Thessalonians.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE prophely contained in this chapter is very remarkable, but somewhat obscure. St Paul foretels that there would happen an almost general defection in the church, before the day of the Lord should come. It has been generally believed, that this prophefy foretold the coming of Antichrift; but it is difficult to explain all the circumstances of this prophefy. It is naturally enough applied to what happened some time after the death of the apostles; when ignorance, error, corruption, tyranny, and all fuperstitions and disorders of every kind, were introduced into the church, and reigned therein for feveral ages: but this prophely does likewife shew, that this apostaly and extreme corruption should not last always, and that the Lord would put an end to it, by his infinite power. God was pleafed that this event should be foretold, that we should not be furprised at it, and the faithful should be upon their guard. It must likewise be observed, after St Paul, that if there have been and still are some people, who have fuffered themselves to be led away by error, it

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is the just judgment of God, because they did not love the truth, and because they took pleasure in vice; but those whom God has enlightned with the pure light of the gospel, ought la give him thanks, because he has from the beginning chosen them to salvation, and the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus christ, standing sast in the dostrine they have received, and proving the Lord to sandisfy them entirely, and to stablish them in every good word and work.

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Strand exhorts the Thessalonians to pray for him, and for the progress of the gospel; and he also prays for them. II. He orders them to withdraw from those who lead a wicked life, and to have no communication with them; and he blames those particularly that lived in idleness. III. He concludes his epistle with prayers for the faithful of Thessalonica.

# REFLECTIONS.

THERE are three principal reflections to be made on this chapter. I. The first is, that zeal for the glory of God obliges all Christians to pray for the propagation of the gospel, and for those faithful ministers that preach it; who, on their part, ought likewise to pray for the church and all its members. II. The second is, that if there be any in the church, who lead a disorderly life, and do not behave themselves according to the commands of our Saviour, we ought not to consider them as our brethren, but withdraw ourselves from them. This is what St Paul expressly orders in the name of Christ, and what is enjoined in several places of the New Testament. Whereby it appears, that discipline should be exercised:

## 380 II THESSALONIANS.

ercised; that scandalous sinners ought not to be esteemed members of the church; and that Christians should avoid all intercourse with them. III. It is to be observed, that the apostle particularly condemns those who, instead of employing themselves, and labouring in an honest calling, spend their lives in idleness, in curiosity, and frivolous engagements. It appears from what St Paul says on this head, that this kind of life, generally very common in cities, and which the world looks upon as innocent, is utterly unworthy of Christians; and that those who follow it do not deserve even to live, since the apostle has expressly declared, that if any would not work, neither should be eat.

The End of the Second Epiftle of St PAUL to the THESSALONIANS.



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# FIRST EPISTLE of St PAUL

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# TIMOTHY.

# ARGUMENT.

St Paul is thought to have writ this epiftle in the year of our Lord fixty four, to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus, to take care of the church in that city. His design was to exhort Timothy to oppose the false teachers; and to instruct him how hishops and pastors ought to govern the church of God.

### CHAP. I.

I. In this chapter, the apostle orders Timothy to hinder certain Jewish doctors from corrupting the doctrine of Christ, by subtle, profane, and extravagant notions, and introducing disputes in the church. II. And because these doctors shewed great zeal for the law, he informs him what is the true use of the law. III. This gives him occasion to speak of the goodness of God in calling him to the office of an apostle, and in general, of the mercy of God towards sinners. IV. And lastly, he exhorts Timothy to discharge the duties of his function with courage, and to oppose false teachers.

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

THE instructions contained in this chapter are the following. I. That the duty of ministers is, to teach and preserve found doctrine, and to oppose fuch as would alter it, by teaching false or vain doc. trines, and fuch as are only fit to raise disputes and troubles in the church. II. That the end of the commendment is charity, fuch as proceeds out of a pure beart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unseigned; and that those who turn aside from this end, lose themselves in useless discourses. By this rule we may judge whether the doctrines preached are true, and whether we ourselves are in the number of true and fincere Christians. III. That the law, considered as prohibiting the groffest crimes, was not fo properly given to good men, who abhor those crimes: from whence it follows, that though it be not abolished, there is no longer the same use for it, in respect to Christians, as formerly; since the gospel trains men up to the most perfect holiness, and to obey God from a principle of love. IV. St Paul teaches us here, that Christ Jesus came into the world to fave finners, which he confirms by his own example. This is a doctrine full of comfort for those finners that are truly penitent. But what St Paul fays here, well deferves our notice, namely, that God had shewn him mercy, because in persecuting the church, and blaspheming the name of Jesus Christ, he had done it through ignorance and unbe-We may learn from hence, that it is more easy to obtain pardon for those fins that are committed through ignorance, than those that are committed wilfully, and contrary to the knowledge we have of the will of God. Lastly, We see in this chapter, that our chief care ought to be, to have a good goo faitl

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good conscience; since in losing that we lose the faith, and fall into the utmost obdurateness.

### CHAP. II.

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I. THE apostle directs that prayer should be made in the church for all men, and particularly for kings and magistrates, though at that time they were heathens: and he founds this order upon the will of God, who would have all men to be saved; and that it was for that purpose he sent his Son into the world, and caused the gospel to be preached. II. He says, that men ought to pray in a spirit of peace and purity; and that women should be present at the assemblies of the church in modest apparel, and continue in respect and silence.

### REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter we learn, I. That it is a very necessary duty in religion, to make public prayers for the falvation of all men, and particularly for kings, and those that are in authority. And therefore that these prayers are an essential part of the Christian worship. II. That the goodness of God towards men is fo great, that he defires that all fhould be faved; for which end, he has given his Son Christ Jesus to be a mediator between God and men. This likewise obliges us to desire the salvation of all men, to love, and to pray for them. III. That no prayers can be acceptable to God, that do not proceed from a pure heart, and from a spirit of charity and peace, tree from wrath and litigiousness. Besides this, the apostle gives Christian women three instructions: the hirlt is, to be clothed decently and modeftly, as it becomes women that profess to serve God; to shun immodefly, and excess of ornaments; and to observe these rules chiefly when they attend the religious assemblies,

affemblies. The fecond is, to remain in filence and fubmission to their husbands at home, as well as in the church. And the third, that they shall be faved, if they take care of the children they bring into the world; if they educate them in piety; and if they themselves continue in faith, charity, holiness and modesty.

### CHAP. III.

T Paul speaks in this chapter, I. Of the impor-D tance of the office of a bishop and pastor, and of the qualities which those ought to have who are admitted into this office. II. Of the office of deacons, whose business it was to distribute the alms of the church, and to affift the bishops in their office; and he shews likewife how deacons ought to be qualified, III. To engage Timothy to admit none into any ecclefiaftical employ but those who were worthy of it, and to govern the church as he ought, he represents to him the dignity of the church of God, and the excellency of the doctrine taught therein.

## REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT St Paul fays of the excellency of the office of a bishop, and of the qualifications that are required in such as aspire to or exercise that office, shews, that it is of divine institution, and of the highest importance. This is what pastors ought most feriously to consider, that they may render themselves worthy of so holy a function; not only by avoiding all those faults that might render their ministry unfruitful, and living in such a manner, as to give no just occasion of reproach; but moreover, by an edifying behaviour, and by giving an example of all kind of virtues. II. From the rules here prescribed by St Paul, it appears that it is not right

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to admit into holy orders any but persons of an unblameable character, and fuch as are able to teach. and govern the church of God. III. All Christians are to confider, that fince this office is of fo great confequence, and the falvation of fouls and the glory of God depend on it, the character of pastors should be efteemed venerable and facred in the church; and those who are invested with it, and behave worthy of it, ought to be had in reverence. As for deacons, it appears from this chapter, that their order, which was established soon after our Lord's ascension, was preserved in all churches, as well as that of bishops; and besides the great use of those offices in which the deacons were employed, this order was of great fervice in forming good paftors; the apostle having established a subordination, and appointed that no one should be raised to the office of bishop but by degrees; and that the bishops should be taken from among the deacons, who had faithfully difcharged that office. By this means none were placed at the head of the church, but perfons well known, and of a fufficient age and experience. It is a great misfortune that this excellent order and subordination is not observed in all churches. Lastly, What the apostle says of the dignity of the church of the living God, and of the excellency of the doctrine aught therein, ought to be seriously considered, as well by those that govern the church as by all the aithful; that so both one and the other may be hereby stirred up to reverence the church of Christ, and to remain inviolably attached to it, and to difharge their duty, every one according to his condiion and calling,

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CHAP.

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### CHAP. III.

ST Paul speaks in this chapter, I. Of the importance of the office of a bishop and pastor, and of the qualities which those ought to have who are admitted into this office. II. Of the office of deacons, whose business it was to distribute the alms of the church, and to assist the bishops in their office; and he shews likewise how deacons ought to be qualified. III. To engage Timothy to admit none into any eccle-fiastical employ but those who were worthy of it, and to govern the church as he ought, he represents to him the dignity of the church of God, and the excellency of the doctrine taught therein.

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CHAP.

### CHAP. IV.

I. THE apostle warns Timothy that there would appear false teachers, who would condemn marriage, and the use of certain meats. II. He exhorts him to teach pure doctrine, and to adhere to true piety, the great advantage of which he represents to him. III. He recommends to him, so to behave as to procure respect to his ministry, notwithstanding his youth, and apply himself diligently to all his duties.

### REFLECTIONS.

THAT we may improve by this chapter, we must observe, I. That, according to the prediction of St Paul, there did arise false teachers, who forbad marriage, and the use of meats, and introduced many other errors in religion, not only in the primitive church, but likewise in the following ages. This should convince us how important it is to avoid error and superstition, and never to depart from the doctrine of the gospel; but it must likewise be remembered, that what St Paul here fays, does by no means authorize libertinism and fenfuality; and that God's creatures must be used with moderation and with thankfgiving. II. As the impostors St Paul speaks of were carnal men, whose aim was to grow rich and enjoy the conveniencies of life, and who made religion subservient to their interests; St Paul affures Timothy, that true piety is the most profitable thing in the world, baving the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; and that God, who takes care of all men, does particularly provide for his faithful fervants. This is an undoubted truth, and teaches us, that the only way to be happy in

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this life, and in that which is to come, is the practice of folid piety. III. St Paul shews in this chapter that it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel, to preach pure doctrine; to be always exercised in godliness, to behave in such a manner as none may have any reason to despise them; to be patterns of faith, holiness, purity, and all kind of virtues, both in their words and in their actions; to cultivate their gifts by labour and study, and by a diligent application to the functions of their office, so that all the world may be witness of their progress, and that they may save themselves, and those who hear them. These lessons of instruction, as they first regard pastors, and demand their most serious attention; fo they should engage all Christians to make a good use of the ministry of their spiritual guides, and to befeech God that he would fanctify those who exercise this holy office, that they may discharge all these duties to the glory of God, and to the edification of his church.

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### CHAP. V.

I ST Paul directs Timothy how to conduct him; felf in reproving and admonishing, and in receiving widows that were maintained at the expence of the church, and who served in several charitable employments; upon which occasion he shews the duty of women, and the faults they are to avoid. II. He speaks next of the duty of homouring and maintaining pastors, and what rules are to be observed when they were accused, or when any one was to be ordained to that office,

### REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT is faid in this chapter, is a leffon to the paftors of the church, to dispense C c 2 their

their exhortations with prudence, fuiting them to the persons to whom they are addressed, and to behave in every respect with discretion, uprightness and integrity. II. The rules which St Paul prescribes concerning widows who were in the fervice of the church, shew that every thing should be done with order in the church of Christ, particularly works of charity; that the distribution of alms, and the care of holy things, should be committed to none but perfons of gravity and piety; and that those who can affift their poor relations, are under an obligation to do it. III. We fee here, that aged women ought to apply themselves to works of piety and charity, and to give young women good inftructions, and fet them good examples: that to be idle, bufy bodies, tattlers, and to gad from house to house, is a life unworthy of christian women, whom God requires to be difcreet, modest, chaste and retired, and to take care of their families. IV. The order St Paul gives Timothy, to reprove publickly those that fin, confirms the necessity of church-discipline and publick censures. Lastly, We may gather from this whole chapter, that the ministry is a very important office; that it requires a great deal of prudence, knowledge, and integrity; that therefore we ought to be very circumspect and deliberate in admitting persons to fo a holy a ministry; as on the other hand we should not lightly accuse or condemn those who exercise it.

### CHAP. VI.

Ention is made in this chapter, I. Of the duties of fervants towards their masters: II. Of talle teachers, who taught a different doctring from that of St Paul, and of the mischief they caused in the church, by raising disputes in it. III. And because

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because these false teachers acted only with a view to their interest, St Paul speaks of content of mind, and of the evils that proceed from the love of riches. IV. He calls upon Timothy with great earnestness to observe all he had directed him, to preserve purity of doctrine, and to shun vain disputes.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE care St Paul takes to fet forth the duty of fervants, after that of pastors, shews, that God defires the falvation of all, and that he has no respect to the difference of mens condition. This shews likewise, that servants ought to be faithful, and in subjection to their masters, and to confider, that if in the time of St Paul, the flaves, whose mafters were heathens, were obliged to this duty, those who serve Christian masters are under a much fricter obligation. II. We should seriously reflect upon what is here faid about nice and useless questions and disputes, and against those who give way to them, whom the apostle describes as full of pride, men of corrupt hearts, who occasioned mischiefs innumerable in the church. This should inspire teachers, and all Christians, with an extreme aversion to disputes of this kind; and engage them, as St Paul advises, to avoid those who raise them, and those who encourage them. III. A third instruction contained in this chapter is, That godliness with contentment is great gain: That we brought nothing into this world, and that it is certain we can carry nothing out: That having food and raiment, we ought to be therewith content. This is a lesson of great importance, and tends very much to produce tranquillity of mind, and to fecure us from those tempoctrine tations which a neglect of this rule exposes us to. caused IV. The apostle confirms this lesson by reminding us, That the love of money is the root of all evil; that Cc3

they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and burtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. This is a truth which is taught us by the word of God, and confirmed by every day's experience. Let us never forget this lesson; let us always remember these excellent and wholesome instructions. V. St Paul exhorts those who have worldly goods, not to be proud, not to trust in uncertain riches, but to be rich in good works, that they may lay up treasure for the time to come, and obtain everlasting life. are duties which the gospel requires of all Christians who have this world's goods, which they ought never to forget. Lastly, The grave and solemn manner in which St Paul requires Timothy to fulfil all the duties of his office, and to keep faithfully that which was committed to his care, should engage all those that exercise the holy ministry to redouble their zeal, and to acquit themselves of their duty with fuch fidelity, that baving fought the good fight of faith, they may lay hold on eternal life, and be without rebuke until the appearing of our Lord Jefus Christ; who in due time shall be manifested to be the bleffed and only potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only bath immortality; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man bath seen, nor can see; to whom be bonour and power everlasting. Amen.

The End of the first Epistle of St PAUL to TIMOTHY.

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# SECOND EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO

# TIMOTHY.

### ARGUMENT.

The apostle St Paul writ this epistle in the year of Christ sixty-six, whilst he was the second time prisoner at Rome, and a little before he suffered martyrdom. In this epistle he renews the exhortations he had before addressed to Timothy, charging him faithfully to discharge with still greater zeal the duties of his office.

### CHAP. I.

I. In this chapter St Paul expresses his tender affection to Timothy, whose faith and godlines he commends. II. He exhorts him to double his zeal, and not to be discouraged by the afflictions to which the faithful, and especially the ministers of the gospel, were exposed; and always to retain the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ. III. He complains of those that had forsaken him, and C c 4 prays

prays to God for the family of Onesiphorus, which took care of him when he was a prisoner at Rome.

## REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

ST Paul's commendation, at the beginning of this epistle, of the piety which Timothy had shewn, even from his youth, and in which he was educated by his mother and grandmother, is a proof of the great happiness of a Christian education; and that those parents who inspire their children with holiness, do bestow upon them the greatest of all blessings. But St Paul's exhortations to Timothy, to ftir up more and more the gift of God which was in him, and to persevere in the faith, do likewise shew, that those who have been religiously educated, and have made a happy beginning, ought carefully to preserve that heavenly gift, endeavour to increase it, and make a constant profession of piety, without ever being ashamed of it, or without being discouraged by the opposition they meet with. All Christians ought to consider these things, but it does, in a more particular manner, concern the ministers of the gospel: and the example of Timothy teaches us, that it is a most valuable bleffing to the church, when God fets over it pastors, who, like Timothy, have lived in piety from their youth, and whose zeal is always increasing. Lastly, The prayers which the apostle makes for Onesiphorus, who had not forfaken him, like others, but had comforted him in his imprisonment, shew, that it is a work very acceptable to God to relieve the afflicted, and especially such as suffer for the gospel; and that those who have done it will receive their reward, and find mercy from the Lord at the last day.

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### CHAP. II.

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I. C T Paul exhorts Timothy to undergo with courage the troubles that attended the exercise of his office. II. He recommends to him, to preach the pure word of God, and to oppose idle and profane disputes, which he represents the pernicious consequences of, by comparing them to a gangrene. which spreads more and more, and by shewing that they were likely to engage men in fatal errors, as it happened to certain false teachers of that time, who denied the refurrection. III. The apostle adds, that nevertheless there were always some faithful teachers and Christians, that kept themselves free from these errors; and that the character which they are known by, is their abstaining from fin. IV. And lastly, He orders Timothy to avoid youthful lufts, to restrain disputes, and labour to bring back those that were fallen into error.

## REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is contained in this chapter directly concerns the ministers of the gospel. They may here see, that their office calls them to serve Christ faithfully, and to this end to devote themselves to him entirely, without engaging in the business of this life; to bear the fatigue attending their office; to promote the edification of the church; to banish error and disputes; and to cause truth, piety, and concord to reign in it; to preserve peace with all those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart; and lastly, to endeavour with zeal, meekness, and patience, to recover those that are engaged in error or vice. Besides these resections, which concern the rulers of the church in particular, we should make these three general remarks; first, that the

character of Christians which we bear, and the vow we made of renouncing the world, in order to devote ourselves to the service of Christ, calls upon us to renounce every thing that may hinder us from being faithful to him; and obliges us to do and to fuffer every thing for the love of him; remembering, that if we fuffer, we shall also reign with bim: If we deny bim, be will also deny us. ly, We fee, moreover, in this chapter, that it is dangerous to hearken to those who disturb the peace of the church, and spread errors therein; and that therefore every one ought to be upon his guard, and never depart from the doctrine which is taught in the word of God, and to be always animated with a spirit of unity and peace. Lastly, All Christians should carefully remember these words of St Paul. which contain at one view the substance of religion, viz. That the Lord knoweth them that are his; that the token by which he knows them is, that they depart from iniquity; that in the church there are veffels of honour and vessels of dishonour; that is to fay, there are good and bad men; and that if a man purge himself from sin, he shall be a vessel unto bonour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

### CHAP. III.

I. S T Paul foretels that great corruption would creep into the church, by the means of false teachers and persons who would corrupt the doctrine and practice of Christianity. II. He exhorts Timothy to shun such people, whose destruction he foretels; to imitate his conduct and patience under afflictions, and chiefly to adhere to the doctrine contained in the holy scriptures, the divine authority and usefulness of which he consirms.

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### REFLECTIONS.

I. THE prophecy which we read in this chapter, and which shews that in the latter days there would be perilous times, is very remarkable. It was fulfilled during the lives of the apostles, and in the fucceeding ages; fince feveral dangerous fects forung up, who, together with damnable errors, introduced impiety and licentiousness. This prophecy extends even to this time, fince we fee fo many Christians, who have nothing but the form of godliness, denying the power thereof, being engaged in wickedness and disorders of every kind. Since this great corruption was foretold, we should not be flaggered at it; on the contrary, we ought to be thereby the more confirmed in the truth. God has thought fit to warn us of it, that we may not fuffer ourselves to be drawn away by evil examples; but that following the exhortation of St Paul, we should refift sin, and slee from those that are guilty This is the duty of all Christians, and particularly of the ministers of the gospel. II. This chapter teaches us, that if whilft we do our duty, by withstanding vice and impiety, we should be exposed to the contradiction of finners, there is nothing more will befal us than what formerly happened to Moses, to St Paul, and most of the faints; because, as St Paul observes on this occasion, those that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer perse-But this should be so far from discouraging us, that it ought to animate us the more in the discharge of our duty. Lastly, The apostle teaches us, that the way to fecure ourselves and others from fin and error, is never to depart from the holy scriptures, which alone are able to make us wife unto falvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. And those who are called into the church to guide and inftruct others,

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others, should take notice that it was by reading and meditating on these divine books, that Timothy became so excellent a minister of Christ; and in them they will find, as St Paul says, every thing necessary to qualify them for the discharge of their holy office.

### CHAP. IV.

I. S T Paul continues to exhort Timothy with great earnestness to discharge all the duties of his office. And, II. That he may the more effectually engage him thereto, he tells him his death was drawing near; for which he expresses great joy, and a firm hope of the glory of heaven. III. He orders Timothy to come and see him as soon as possible, complains of those who had forsaken him, and concludes this epistle with salutations and affectionate wishes.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. THOSE whom God calls to the holy ministry, have, in this chapter, powerful motives to discharge all the parts of their duty, and especially to preach the word of God, to reprove, and in all feafons to exhort with zeal, with evidence, and with meekness. This they are engaged to do by those grave admonitions which St Paul addresses to Timothy, charging him before God, and from the confideration of the last judgment, to redouble his zeal and watchfulness. II. St Paul here informs the ministers of the gospel, that times of danger often come, when men diflike the purity and fimplicity of the Christian doctrine, cannot bear the truth, and love to hear fuch doctrines as flatter their curiofity, and especially their passions. Which shews, that those who are called to instruct others, have need

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need of the utmost prudence and fidelity to difcharge the duties of their office in a proper manner, and with good fuccess. III. The joy and confidence which this apostle shewed at the time he was going to fuffer martyrdom, is a proof to us of the great courage and constancy wherewith those that have ferved God faithfully are animated when their death draws near. And fince St Paul declares, that the crown of righteousness was reserved not only for him, but likewise for all those who love the appearance of their Lord and Saviour; we ought always to imitate this apostle in the zeal and love which he testified for Christ; we out to fight the good fight, to finish our course, and to keep the faith, even to the end. IV. The complaints St Paul makes against those who had forsaken him, and those who had used him ill, shew, that there have been at all times fome who have opposed the faithful fervants of God; and that even in the bosom of the church there are worldly men, who love the present world better than Christ; as also fearful and cowardly persons, that durst not make an open profession of piety, nor stand by those who maintain it. Laftly, We fee by what St Paul here fays of what happened to him at Rome, that though the faithful are without support in respect to the world, yet that God never forfakes them in trials and in dangers, but that he strengthens them, and after having delivered them from all evil, he will fave them in his heavenly kingdom.

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## EPISTLE of St PAUL

TO

# TITUS.

### ARGUMENT.

It is thought St Paul writ this epistle about the year of Christ sixty-four, to Titus, whom he had left in the island of Crete, now called Candia, to take care of the churches that were there.

### CHAP. I.

orders Titus to appoint pastors in all the churches of the island of Crete, and describes the qualities with which they ought to be endowed. II. He speaks of certain Jewish doctors that added many trisling questions and fables to the doctrines of the gospel, particularly with regard to the use of meats; and who were besides this of a vicious disposition, like most of the inhabitants of the isle of Crete.

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## REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

CINCE St Paul directs Titus to regulate all things in the churches of Crete, and particularly to fettle pastors there, it appears from hence, that it is the will of God that order should be obferved in the church; and particularly, that in every place where there are Christians, there should be pastors, their office being of divine institution, and of absolute necessity; but the great precaution which he advises him to use in the choice of those ministers he was to appoint, proves, that that facred employment ought to be intrusted to none but persons without reproach, and of an exemplary life, and who have withal the necessary gifts to teach, and preferve the purity of the evangelical doctrine against such as would corrupt it. We fee, besides, that it is the duty of the ministers of Christ to set themselves against false teachers, and fuch as might feduce Christians, and engage them in error or in fin. The apostle's reflection upon the vicious dispositions of the inhabitants of the isle of Crete, whom he represents as addicted to lying, wickedness, sloth, and sensuality, shews, that it is very difficult for fuch as have an evil heart, and vicious inclinations, to become true disciples of Christ; but that, however, the servants of God ought to neglect nothing to bring them to the faith. Lastly, We ought seriously to reflect upon the description the apostle here makes of the false teach. ers and wicked Christians he is there speaking of; faying, They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. These words are an exact reprefentation of many false Christians, who live in the communion of the church; and teach us, that the profession of religion and faith in God, do

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do not avail those that live in disobedience; and, as they renounce God by their works, he will not own them for his.

### CHAP. XVI.

ST Paul does two things in this chapter: I. He fets forth the duties of old men and women; of young men and fervants; and charges Titus, to be himself to all these, and especially to young people, an example of wisdom and virtue. II. He gives us here an excellent abridgment of the Christian doctrine, and shews what is the design of it.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter teaches us, in general, that it is the great duty of pastors, to form the minds of men to piety and holiness, and carefully to instruct all men in the duties peculiar to their station and calling. II. Aged persons may from hence learn to be fober, grave, pious, and abounding in charity; Christian women to live likewise in fobriety; to avoid flander; to love their husbands; to take care of their children and family: young people to be moderate, temperate, chafte, and regular in their whole behaviour; and fervants to be fubject to their masters, and serve them with sidelity. III. St Paul's earnest address to Titus, to be a pattern to others of purity, gravity, and good works, is an argument, that those who undertake to exhort and instruct others, should first practise what they teach, and fet men an example of all kind of virtues. IV. But we ought, all of us in general, carefully to attend to the fummary of the Christian doctrine St Paul gives us in this chapter, in which he fays, that the grace of God, that has been manifested by Jesus Christ, calls us to renounce,

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not only ungodlines, and direct crimes, but like-wise to renounce unlawful desires, and the love of the world, and to live in temperance and purity with respect to ourselves, in justice towards our neighbour, and in piety towards God; and that it is only by living thus, that we may expect with considence the last and glorious coming of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This doctrine the ministers of the gospel should preach, and this should be the rule of every Christian's conduct: This too is the end and design of Christ's coming, and of his death; since, as St Paul says, he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto bimself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

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I. S T Paul directs Christians to submit themfelves to the higher powers, to slander no
body, and to abound in meekness and charity, even
towards those who were enemies of the Christian religion; and to remember, that God in his great
mercy had saved them, when they likewise lived in
all kind of irregularities. II. He orders Titus to recommend particularly the practice of good works to
those who had embraced Christianity; to oppose
such as raised disputes in the church by foolish questions, and to shun those who formed sects and parties,
and broached false and dangerous doctrines; and he
concludes with some directions which he gives to
Titus.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter teaches us, I. To be subject to kings and magistrates, to avoid calumny and disputes, and to behave with perfect meekness to-Vol. III. Dd wards

wards all. II. St Paul teaches us here, that God bas faved us, not by works of righteoufness which we have done, but according to bis mercy, - through Jefus Christ our Saviour. That being justified by his grace, we may be made beirs according to the hope of everlasting life. A most important doctrine, which ought to produce in us fentiments of profound humility, and unfeigned thanks to God. III. The apostle in this chapter declares in the most positive manner, that there is nothing more certain, nor more important, nor which the ministers of the gofpel ought to inculcate and recommend with more earnestness, than this, that they which have believed in God, Sould be careful to maintain good works: These things being good and profitable unto men. words shew, that the practice of good works is the most indispensable duty of Christianity, and the distinguishing mark of a true Christian. Finally, We fee here, that when there are persons in the church who teach dangerous doctrines, and who form fects and parties therein, we are to admonish them; and, if they continue to disturb the peace of the church we are not to own them for its members, nor to have any communication with them. This is the only method prescribed by Christ and his apostles whereby to oppose error, and preserve in the church purity of faith.

The End of the Epistle of St PAUL to TITUS.

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# EPISTLE of St PAUL

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# PHILE MON.

### ARGUMENT.

Rome the first time, about the year of Christ sixty one, the subject of which was as follows: Philemon, who was of the city of Coloss, and who, after St Paul had converted him to Christianity, exercised his ministry in that city with great success, had a slave, named Onesimus, who ran away from him; and, coming to Rome, met with St Paul, who converted him to the Christian religion; after which he sent him back to Philemon, with a letter of recommendation, in which he intreats him to forgive Onesimus, and to receive him as a brother in Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

E see in this epistle, I. That One simus coming to Rome, after he had left his master Philemon, St Paul laboured to convert this fugitive slave, and had the comfort to bring him D d 2 over

over to the Christian faith. Thus this apostle embraced all occasions of promoting the glory of God, and the falvation of men; as true Christians are always ready to gain fouls to God, and to recover finners from the error of their ways. II. The apostle, after he had converted Onesimus, sent him back to his master, because this slave's conversion no way deprived Philemon of his right over him; he intreated him to forgive him, and even offered to pay him all that Onefimus owed him, and make fatisfaction for all the wrong he might have done him. This whole proceeding of St Paul, is a proof of his charity, meekness, justice, and integrity. Such is the character of good men; they are always concerned for those who stand in need of their affistance, especially, for pious and godly men, or finners who return to their duty; and they are also animated with a spirit of justice and equity, and defire to render to all their due. We may likewise make this farther reflection, that if St Paul offered to fatisfy Philemon for what Onesimus owed him, though he was not obliged in strictness to do it; those who have done any wrong to others, are much more obliged to make it good. Laftly, The order which St Paul gives Philemon, to receive Onesimus, no longer as a flave, but as a brother, shews, that though Christianity does not destroy the different relations among men, but supposes and admits a difference of condition; yet it makes all men equal before God, and with respect to eternal falvation. It appears likewise from hence, that Christian masters ought to consider their fervants as their brethren in Christ Jesus, and to treat them with all mildness and humanity.

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# EPISTLE of St PAUL

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# HEBREWS.

### ARGUMENT.

There is reason to believe St Paul wrote this epistle in the year of our Lord fixty one, being a prisoner at Rome; and addressed it to the Hebrews, that is to fay, to the Jews that were converted to Christianity. His design is, to confirm them in the profession of the gospel, and in boliness, and to prevent them from being drawn away by the fondness they might fill bave for the Jewish religion and worship, or by the persecutions, which Christians were exposed to, and the allurements of fin; for which purpose be shews, that Christ is greater than Moses, that the gospel is more excellent than the law, and that the ceremonies and facrifices of the law had had their accomplish. ment in Jesus Christ, and were consequently abolished by his coming, and by his sacrifice. This is the subjest of the first ten chapters. In the three last, be exhorts the Hebrews to perseverance in the faul, to patience under afflictions, and to the most important duties of religion.

### CHAP. I.

T Paul teaches in this chapter, that God had revealed himself to men by Jesus Christ, in a more perfect manner than he had ever done be-

fore. He proves the excellency of the gospel, by the infinite dignity of Jesus Christ the Son of God; shewing that he was exalted to supreme glory in heaven, and that he is more excellent than the angels; and he confirms the divinity of his person.

REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

I. THE first truth which St Paul teaches in this epistle, is, that Jesus Christ is not a mere man, or only a great prophet, or even an angel; but that he is infinitely above the prophets, and even the angels, being the only Son of God; that by him the world was made; that God has fet him on his right hand; and that all the angels worship him as their Lord. Since St Paul first fettles this doctrine of our Lord's divinity, and from thence proves the excellence of the Christian religion, it evidently appears, that our whole religion is founded on this doctrine; and, therefore, that all Christians ought to believe and embrace it. II. St Paul tells us, that God has fpoken to us in these last days by his Son; which engages us to praise God, that we have the advantage of living under the most perfect of all dispensations, and in the happy times of the gospel. III. Since God has revealed his will to us by his own Son, and manifested himself in a more perfect manner than he had done before, it is our indispensable duty to improve the bleffing of the covenant of grace, and to furpass in holiness those who lived before the coming of Jesus Christ. Lastly, The consideration of our Lord's divinity, and of the supreme power to which he is exalted in heaven, should lead us to worship him, to hope in him, and to obey the gospel we receive from him, as St Paul proves in the following chapter.

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## CHAP. II.

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I. S T Paul exhorts the Hebrews to continue stedfast in the profession of the gospel, which had been preached to them by Jesus Christ and the apostles, and confirmed by the gists of the holy Ghost. II. He shews for this purpose, that though Jesus was man, and humbled himself even unto death, yet all things are made subject unto him; and that God has raised him to heavenly glory after his sufferings. III. He shews, in the last place, that God was pleased that our Lord should take our nature and suffer, that he might redeem men from the power of the devil, and of death, and that the faithful might learn from his example not to be afraid of afflictions.

### REFLECTIONS.

ST Paul teaches us here, 1. That the gospel having been preached by Jefus Christ and the apostles, and confirmed by the gifts of the holy Ghost, we have undeniable proofs of the divinity of the Christian doctrine; and that therefore we shall be altogether inexcufable, and shall not escape the vengeance of God, if we neglect this great falvation that is offered to us, and if we do not openly profess the truth, and sincerely obey the gospel. II. The consideration of the glory and power wherewith Christ was invested after his humiliation and death, teaches us, that the fufferings to which the faithful are exposed, will not hinder them from attaining to glory; it being the will of God, to bring them to glory the same way that Christ himself arrived at it. III. We ought likewile to consider, that the Son of God took upon him the nature of man, and was lower than the angels for a time, that through the goodness of God he might die for all men, make an atonement for their fins, Dd4

fins, and destroy the empire of the devil, and of death. This is a doctrine which should fill us with joy, and a firm considence in God through Christ, and which likewise very strongly engages us to live as his redeemed, and to slee from sin, lest we should fall again under the power of the devil, and of death, from which our Lord came to deliver us.

### CHAP. III.

I HE apostle does two things in this chapter:

I. He shews, that Christ was far above Moses, since Moses was only a servant in the house of God; whereas Christ, as a Son, is the Lord and master of it. II. He exhorts the Hebrews to obey the gospel, and not to imitate the Israelites, who were excluded from the land of Canaan, and who died in the wilderness, because of their rebellion and unbelief.

## REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT St Paul fays in this chapter, of the excellency of the person and ministry of Christ above the person and ministry of Moses, should make us fensible of the obligation which Christians lie under of adhering to Christ by a sincere obedience and true faith, as it proves the greatness of the crime which those are guilty of who fall into disobedience and unbelief. II. We are to confider, that the ancient Israelites, for their rebellion and unbelief when Moses caused them to hear the voice of God, died in the wilderness; and God swore that they should not enter into the rest which was prepared in the land of Canaan for the people of Ifrael. It is thus God refolves to exclude from rest in heaven those whose heart wanders from the right way, and who provoke him by their rebellion and obdurateness. This is a powerful engagement to be attentive, and fubmit

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fubmit to the gospel and to improve the day of grace, at St. Paul speaks in this serious exhortation; To day if you will hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts: Take heed lest there he in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, whilst the time and day of grace lasts, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

### CHAP. IV.

I. C T Paul continues to shew, that as the disober dient Ifraelites did not enter into the land of Canaan, To neither shall the unbelieving Christians enter into the kingdom of heaven. For this purpose he observes, that what David says in the Psalms, of the peoples entering into God's rest, is not so much to be understood of the land of Canaan, as of the true rest, which consists in the enjoyment of the falvation that Christ has obtained for us. II. He concludes from thence, that we ought to labour to enter into this rest: He declares, that unbelievers shall not escape those threatenings which the word of God has denounced against them; fince his word is true, and divine, and powerful. And laftly, To encourage the Hebrews to persevere in the Christian profession, and to be constant under afflictions, he represents that Jesus Christ is a merciful high-priest, who is ascended into heaven; and who having himself suffered, is inclined to have compassion upon our infirmities, and to affift us in all our wants.

### REFLECTIONS.

W E learn from this chapter, I. That those who despise and neglect the promises of God, shall be deprived of them; and that the word of God is of no use, when it is not attended with faith in those

those that hear it; wherefore all those to whom this word is preached and these promises are made, should be careful to receive them with obedience of faith. 11. St Paul teaches us, that there is a rest which Christ has acquired for us, and which is much more excellent than that which was promifed to the Ifraelites in the land of Canaan; and as the Israelites could not enter into the rest of the land of Canaan because of their infidelity and rebellion, so those who do not obey Christ Jesus, and who despise his gospel, will be deprived of everlasting rest. The consequence St Paul would have us draw from hence, is to use our utmost endeavours to enter into that rest, lest we should fall into the like rebellion. III. To engage us to this dury, the apostle represents to us, that the word of God is true, and powerful, and that the threatnings of the gospel are no less certain; that they will be infallibly executed, and that we shall not be able to escape from him with whom we have to do, fince all things are naked and open in his fight. Laftly, Since we know that Jefus, our great high-prieft, entered into heaven after he had been himself tempted in all things like unto us, fin only excepted, and that he is also a gracious and merciful high-prieft; we have the most powerful motives to hold fast the profession we make of believing in him, to trust in his promises, and to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to belp in the time of need.

### CHAP. V.

ST Paul treating of the priesthood of Jesus Christ shews, I. That he was called by God to the office of a priest, which he proves by two prophecies, taken out of the book of Psalms, and particularly by that which foretels that the Messiah should be

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be a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec. II. He says next, that Christ performed the functions of a priest, when he suffered death for the salvation of men. III. And lastly, When he is going to speak of the priesthood of our Lord, and of the resemblance there was between him and Melchisedec, he reproaches the Hebrews with the small progress they had made in the knowledge of the mysteries of religion, which he was going to explain to them.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter teaches us, that Christ was appointed by God to be our high-prieft, and that under this character he offered up himself a sacrifice for the fins of mankind. This engages us to look upon Jesus Christ as the author of our salvation, who has rendered God propitious and favourable to us; but this very doctrine should likewife convince us of our obligation to fubmit ourselves to the gofpel, by a fincere obedience; fince, as St Paul fays, Christ became the author of eternal salvation to those only that obey bim. II. The second reflection relates to the fufferings of Christ, which St Paul describes, faying, our Lord, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto bim that was able to save bim from death; and was heard, in that he feared, having learnt obedience by the things which be suffered. St Paul said this, not only to shew that Jesus Christ discharged on earth the office of a high-priest; but also to comfort Christians in affliction and persecution. The children of God may discover, from what happened to our Lord, that when they are exposed to sufferings, they are like their Saviour; that God fends them afflictions, to teach them patience and obedience, and to call upon him with greater zeal; and that God will hear them and deliver them, when they offer up their

prayers to him in their necessities. III. We are to consider that if the apostle reproached the Hebrews for being so little advanced in knowledge, that they still needed to be taught the first principles of Christianity, we should be much more ashamed to deserve the like reproaches, considering the time that is employed in instructing us; wherefore we ought to exert ourselves in acquiring new light, and in daily making greater progress in the knowledge of religion.

## CHAP. VI.

. T Paul tells the Hebrews, that it was not his intention to teach them the first rudiments of religion, but that he defigned to propose to them more fublime doctrines, discoursing of the similitude which there was between Christ and Melchisedec; and the ancient priefts. II. To excite them to make a progress in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, he sets before them the unhappiness of those who, neglecting to confirm themselves in the faith, and despising the knowledge and graces they have received from God, do not produce the fruits which God expects from them, and at last renounce the truth and forfake Christ. III. He tells the Hebrews, that the reason why he spake to them in this manner, was to awaken their zeal, fince he was convinced that they would not expose themselves to the like misfortunes. IV. And laftly, To strengthen their faith, he represents to them the steadiness of God's promises, by the example of Abraham, and the certainty of that hope which Christ's entrance into heaven gives all believers.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. W E ought to take great notice of the first verses of this chapter, in which St. Paul shews,

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shews us what are the fundamental articles of religion, viz. The doctrine of faith in God; of repentance and forfaking fin; of baptifm; of the refurrection of the dead; and of the last judgment. Wherefore these are the doctrines which we should all firmly believe, and which are necessary to falva-II. The apostle teaches us, that it is not enough to know these doctrines, but that Christians ought to aim at greater perfection, and to join to the knowledge of these essential truths, that of other truths, which ferve to give light to religion, and to confirm the faith. St Paul even intimates, that when we neglect to improve in knowledge, we are in great danger of losing all relish for the truths of religion, to renounce the faith; and fall into infidelity. III. He declares in this chapter, that those who have been once enlightened, and have tafted the good word of God, and the heavenly gift; if they renounce the truth and godliness, cannot repent, at least without extreme difficulty, and if they persevere in that state must perish. This should make us extremely afraid to fin against light, to defpife the word of God, and to refift the workings of his grace, left we should bring upon ourselves the curse which St Paul denounces against those who abuse the grace of God; which he represents by a piece of ground that is duly cultivated, and watered with frequent rains, and bears nothing but thorns and briars, and is therefore curfed, and appointed to be burned. IV. And laftly, Those who believe the gospel, and manifest the sincerity of their faith by their patience and charity, may for their comfort and encouragement confider what the apostle says here, that God is not unrighteous, to forget their work and labour of love; that his promifes are unchangeable, having been made with an oath, and confirmed by Christ's exaltation into heaven, where

where he is entered as our forerunner. This is the hope of the faithful, which, as an anchor of the foul, sure and stedfast, penetrates even into heaven, and makes them unmoveable in the midst of the trials and afflictions to which they are exposed.

#### CHAP. VII.

N this chapter St Paul shews the excellency of the priefthood of Jesus Christ, by considering him as a priest after the order of Melchisedec. For which end he observes, I. That Melchisedec was a priest after a different manner from the Jewish priefts. This appears, because he was a king, and because the scripture does not relate his genealogy, nor fay any thing either of his predecessors, or of his fuccessors after his death; in which he was a type of Jesus Christ, who is eternal, and our only high-prieft. The apostle adds, that Melchisedec was fuperior to Abraham, that patriarch having paid him tithes of the spoil. II. St Paul observes farther, that Christ was not of the family of Aaron, out of which the Jewish priests were chosen, and that God had promifed with an oath that the priesthood according to Melchisedec was to be everlasting. From all these considerations St Paul would infer, that the priesthood of the Messiah was of a quite different nature from that of the Jewish priests; that he was to be both king and priest together, and the only priest; that his facrifice was to be only one, and that most perfect; and that, consequently, the Levitical priesthood was to be abolished. III. The apostle shews, about the end of the chapter, that Christ infinitely excelled the Jewish priests by his perfect holiness.

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THE principal observation that we are to make upon this whole chapter, is to acknowledge and admire the infinite wildom of God, who had fo clearly fignified in the ancient prophecies what the Messiah was to be, as St Paul shews, by proving so evidently out of the law itself, and from the Old Testament, that the Levitical worship and priesthood were to be abolished by the facrifice and oblation of our Lord Jesus Christ. This ought powerfully to convince us of the truth of the gofpel, and flir us up to fearch into and meditate upon the scriptures, and particularly the prophets, in which we find fuch convincing proofs of the divinity of the Christian doctrine. And fince the defign of this whole chapter is to instruct us in the perfection and efficacy of the facrifice of Christ, we cannot doubt but that we shall find in him all that is necessary to obtain the pardon of our fins, and to purify our fouls; and that having for our priest and our king one that is perfectly holy, and exalted above the heavens, he will be able to fave to the utmost all those that come to God by him.

# CHAP. VIII.

The apostle does two things. I. He goes on to shew, that Christ was superior to the Jewish priests upon the following account: That having been exalted to heaven, he is the minister and high priest of the heavenly sanctuary, whereas the ancient priests were no more than ministers of the earthly sanctuary. II. With the same view he shews, that God had foretold by the prophet Jeremiab, that the covenant which he formerly made with the Israelites should be abolished, and that he would enter into a more excellent.

exellent one with mankind, in which he would pardon their fins, and fanctify them by his spirit.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter engages us to make the three following reflections. I. That we have a great high priest in the heavens, set at the right hand of the divine majesty. This entrance of Christ into heaven, is the greatest proof of the perfection and efficacy of his facrifice, and should likewise assure us, that he has procured all true believers a right to the heavenly glory, and that he will one day exalt them to it. II. The fecond reflection -relates to the happiness we have of being admitted into the new covenant, which God had promifed to make with men at the coming of the Messiah, for which we owe him our continual gratitude and thankfulness. III. In the third place, fince the end which God proposed to himself by this covenant was to put his laws in our heart, to fill us all with the knowledge and fear of him, and to forgive us our fins; we should remember that this covenant will be useless with respect to us, unless we on our part make fuitable returns, and faithfully discharge those duties which our covenant with him requires of us; this we learn from the example of the Jews, who did not keep the covenant of the Lord, and who, for that reason, were rejected by him. Lastly, Since God has promifed to write his holy laws in our hearts, and in our minds, we should befeech him, according to his promifes, to increase in us his knowledge more and more, and to imprint his fear and love in our hearts by the effectual working of his grace, so that we may always be his true people, and he may be always our God.

CHAP.

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we fee, that the tacrifice of Chart have on a I. CT Paul gives us a description of the ancient I tabernacle, and of the fervice performed therein; and he observes particularly, that the high priest entred but once a year into the most holy place; which was to shew, that the way to heaven was not yet revealed to all men. II. He informs us next, that the facrifices and other ceremonies of the Jews, were types and figures of what was to happen one day : and especially, that the entrange of the high priest into the most holy place, fignified, that Christ would enter into heaven by his own blood; and that by this means he would obtain for us an eternal redemption; his blood having a power to fanctify men, which that of the legal victims wanted. III. The apostle adds. that as the ancient covenant was confirmed by the blood of the victims, so was the new, which is far more excellent, by the blood of Christ. IV. He concludes from all this, that the facrifice of Christ is perfect, and of an infinite value; that it must not be repeated; and that Christ being once dead, there is nothing more to be expected, but that he should come at the last day to introduce the faithful into his glory.

# REFLECTIONS.

THE comparison St Paul makes, between the priests of the law, and Jesus Christ, tends chiesly to instruct us in the power and virtue of his death and facrifice. We see here, that the blood of Christ has a virtue with which the legal facrifices were not attended; for a smuch as it opens to us the way to heaven, where our Lord is entred for us, as well as for himself; which gives us the most glorious and exalted hopes. But St Paul teaches us likewise, Vol. III.

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that this blood must fanctify and purge our conscience from dead works, to ferve the living God; by which we fee, that the facrifice of Christ lays us under a necessity of labouring for our fanctification, and enables us fo to do. To the same end, we must meditate upon what is faid in this chapter, that the covenant of the gospel was confirmed by the blood and death of the Son of God; by which that covenant is made firm and unchangeable in all that it contains; the duties it prescribes are altogether inviolable and facred, and its threats, as well as its promises, will be infallibly executed. Lastly, If the facrifice of Christ was only once offered, and can never be repeated; and if there remains nothing more, but his returning at the last day to fave those that wait for him, and who live in godliness; it follows from thence, that there is but one only means, and one only time to obtain falvation. The only means is, to lay hold on the grace which is offered us in Christ Jesus; and the only time is, the time of this life; fince it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.

# C'HAP. X.

I. ST Paul shews, that the sacrifices of the law were not capable of atoning for the sins of men, nor of sanctifying them; and that nothing but the facrifice of Jesus Christ, and the oblation he has once made of his body by the will of God, could produce this effect. II. Having thus proved the impersection of the Jewish sacrifices, and the persection of the facrifice of our Lord Jesus, he exhorts the Hebrews to draw near to God with considence, and to persevere in the profession of the Christian religion, and in the practice of good works. III. He threatens with the most terrible punishments those, who

who after having received the knowledge of the gofpel, fall into disobedience and apostasy. IV. And for fear persecution should stagger the faith of Christians, and make them call in question the promises of God, he exhorts them to suffer with the same considence as they had done till then, and to wait with patience, and with stedsast faith, the sulfilling of his promises.

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#### REFLECTIONS.

THE first part of this chapter instructs us in the perfection of the facrifice of Christ, and of its effects. St Paul teaches us, that our fins were expiated by the oblation Christ made of his body upon the cross; and that after having offered himself as a facrifice for the fins of mankind, he is fet down for ever on the right hand of God. Besides this, the apostle makes us consider the facrifice of our Lord as an effect of his submission to the will of his Father, and of his love towards us. These are considerations which should convince us, that the work of our redemption is fully accomplished, which should inspire us with an ardent love for this gracious Saviour, and engage us likewife to submit in all things to the will of God. The fecond part of this chapter furnishes us with these four instructions. I. That since Christ has obtained for us, by his death and ascension, an entrance into heaven, we may draw near to God with full affurance, if we do it with a heart purified and cleansed from the defilements of fin. II. That we ought to persevere in the open profession of the faith, and excite one another continually to piety, charity, and all good works. III. That although the gospel be a covenant of grace, yet it threatens with the most dreadful punishments those that shall break it; that the punishments which the gospel denounces against those that shall despise the blood of the Son of God, Ee 2

and affront his holy Spirit, are infinitely more terrible, than what was inflicted upon those who violated the law of Moses; that there remains no more facrifice for rebellious and apostate Christians, that they have nothing to expect but a tremendous judgment, and that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. IV. This portion of scripture teaches us, that Christians ought never to faint under persecutions; that they ought even to suffer with joy the loss of their goods, and the most grievous afflictions, since they will afterwards infallibly meet with a great reward from God; and that when they have done his will, they shall receive the fruit of his promises.

# CHAP. XI.

THE apostle, to confirm the faith of the Hebrews in time of perfecution, propofes to them the example of the patriarchs, and of the faithful of old, who, by their faith and trust in the promises of God, had been acceptable to him, and had overcome the feverest trials. Upon this account he speaks of the nature of faith, and its surprising effects, and alledges the examples of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarab; to which he adds that of Isaac, Jacob, and Foseph, who, by the bleffings which they gave their children, and by what they faid before their death, shewed that they were convinced that the promises of God should be fulfilled. He speaks of Moses, of the delivering the children of Ifrael out of Egypt, and their subduing the land of Canaan; and lastly, of the judges, of Samuel, of David, and of divers prophets and martyrs, who by their faith had done great miracles, and had endured with constancy all kind of torments, and even death itself.

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I. THIS chapter instructs us in the nature of faith. and its effects. St Paul teaches us here, that faith is a strong and lively persuasion of the truth of God's promifes, and makes us confider them as prefent, though we do not yet fee them; that it confifts in believing that there is a God, the rewarder of those that ferve him; and that we cannot be acceptable to II. The apostle sets before us him without faith. the wonderful effects of faith, in the examples of Abel, Enoch, Noah, the patriarchs and prophets, and other illustrious faints before Christ. From all these examples we may observe in general, I. That in all ages, from the beginning of the world, there have been holy men, who have believed in God, hoped in his promises, and have shewn the sincerity of their faith, by obeying God under the greatest difficulties. II. That faith has always been necessary, and no one was ever acceptable to God but by faith. III. That true faith has always produced these three effects, viz. Trust in God's promises, obedience to his commands, and conftancy in afflictions. we have an example of in the patriarch Abraham, who gave such extraordinary proofs of his faith, in leaving his own country, and offering up his fon Isaac, and living, as his fons did, a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, expecting a better life, and feeking a heavenly country. The fame is very remarkable likewise in the conduct of Moses, who chose rather to fuffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the advantages that were offered him in Egypt; as well as in the furprifing constancy of the ancient martyrs under persecution, and the most cruel tortures. All these examples should enliven our faith in an extraordinary manner; inspire us with courage and zeal, and engage us to obey God in all things, Ee 3 and

and even to suffer every thing for his sake. And if we consider, as St Paul observes at the end of this chapter, that we have many advantages, which those who lived before the coming of Christ did not enjoy, we shall find ourselves under a much stricter obligation to walk in the sootsteps of those holy and illustrious servants of God, that by imitating their faith, we may, like them, arrive at persection and salvation.

#### CHAP. XII.

I. CT Paul exhorts the Hebrews to imitate the examples of the faithful under the Old Teffament, which he had fet before them in the preceeding chapter; but above all the example of Christ; and to fuffer afflictions with patience. II. He further observes to them, that afflictions are the signs and effects of God's love, and that great advantage refults from them to true believers; and encourages them, by these confiderations, to fuffer persecution with patience. III. He exhorts them to holiness and perseverance in the faith; and advises them to shun every thing that might occasion their falling away from the grace of God, and not to fuffer themselves to be feduced by fenfuality. IV. He compares the manner in which the law was given on mount Sinai, with the manner of publishing the gospel; by which comparison he defigns to shew, how severe their punishment will be, who despise the voice of Christ, and violate the covenant of grace.

### REFLECTIONS.

WE learn from hence, I. That the examples of the faints and true believers, who formerly rendered themselves acceptable to God by their faith, patience and obedience, has a great tendency to incite us to the same duties; especially since God has vouchsafed tale ver

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fafed us greater light, and more grace than to them; and, above all, as we have before our eyes the example of Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. II. The apostle instructs us concerning the nature of afflictions; and though what he fays relates properly to perfecution for the fake of the gospel, it may be applied to afflictions in general; fince it is always true, that God chastens us in love, to render us partakers of his holiness; and that afflictions produce very happy effects in those who receive them as they ought. This doctrine engages us in the two following duties: The one is, neither to faint, nor to murmur in affliction; but to suffer it patiently, and even with joy, of what kind soever it be; since it is God our Father that fends it, and he only does it for our good: The other duty is, to answer the ends which God proposes to himself by afflicting us, to make a right use of the evils we undergo, and to make them instruments of our amendment and advancement in holiness. III. We learn in this chapter our indispenfable obligation to study to live in peace and holiness, without which we cannot fee the Lord. IV. The apostle advises us to labour with great diligence to preserve ourselves in the favour of God, and to take care that there be in us no feed of unbelief and rebellion that may deprive us of it: And he proves, by the example of Esau, that it is of the greatest importance to avoid fenfuality, and not to prefer the vain and frivolous advantages of the world, before that everlasting happiness which God offers us, lest we be deprived of the bleffing of our heavenly Father. Lastly, The comparison which the apostle here makes between the law and the gospel, offers us these two reflections: The first is, that we live under a covenant much more excellent than that of the Jews, and therefore are firictly obliged to keep and obey it. For this reason St Paul reminds us, that we are mem-Ee 4 bers

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bers of the Christian church, that the gospel has been preached to us by the Son of God himself, and confirmed by his own blood; and, that God calls us to the possession of an infinite glory in heaven with all the faints and angels. The fecond reflection is, that though the gospel was not published with such awful folemnity as the law was formerly upon mount Sinai; and though we live under a dispensation of grace and mercy; those who shall despise the voice of Christ have reason to fear punishments much more severe than those denounced against the Jews. This is what St Paul expresses in these words: If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from bim that speaketh from beaven. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, that we may ferve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a confuming fire. Emencs of our amendment and advancement in

# A theels III. VIIIX of A H O er out indipen-

I. In this last chapter, the apostle exhorts the Hebrews to charity, chastity, content of mind, and trust in God. II. He recommends to them to remember their spiritual guides, and not to be drawn away from the pure doctrine which he had taught them, either by those who wanted to retain the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Mosaical law, or by fear of persecution. III. He prescribes to them the true Christian sacrifice of praise and beneficence, and charges them to submit to their pastors. IV. and lastly, He recommends himself to their prayers, and prays for their sanctification.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE duties prescribed in this chapter are the following: I. To love one another as brethren;

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to exercise charity and hospitality; and to take care of those that suffer persecution for the gospel. II. To live in chaftity, whether in a fingle or married flate; to abhor all kind of uncleannels, remembering that God will one day judge the impure. III. To flee covetousness, to be content with our condition, and always to rely upon the providence of God. IV. To look upon the things of the world, and what flatters the defires of the flesh, as St Paul would have Christians look upon the ceremonies of the law; and, to remember that the character of Christians, and faith in Christ crucified, call us to take up our cross, and to live in this world as those who bave no continuing city here, but seek one to come. V. Never to neglect the dury of praise and thanksgivings, nor that of charity and alms; both of them being most pleasing facrifices to God. VI. St Paul, as usual. charges Christians to remember their pastors, to obey them, and submit to them, as those who watch for their fouls, and to pray continually for them. Laftly, He concludes these exhortations, and this epistle, with this prayer in behalf of the Hebrews, and which we ought to make for ourselves, and for one another: May the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The End of the Epistle of St PAUL to the HEBREWS.

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# GENERAL EPISTLE

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# ST J A M E S.

#### ARGUMENT.

This epifile and the following are called Catholic, that is to say, universal or general, because they were wrote to Christians in general, and not to some particular persons or churches. This of St James is directed to the fews of the twelve tribes, who had been long dispersed in divers countries, and had embraced the Christian religion. The design of it is, to strengthen them against persecutions, and chiefly against certain false teachers, and hypocrites, who professing themselves Christians, and hoasting that they knew more than others, lived in sin and licentiousness. What time this epistle was written is not certain.

### CHAP. I.

HE apostle here exhorts the believers to rejoice in afflictions, and to seek by prayer for that affistance which they stood in need of to support them. II. He comforts those Christians who were persecuted or despised by the world, and

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he exhorts the rich to be humble. III. He speaks against those, who, yielding to persecution and other temptations, threw the fault on God, and maintained that he inclined men to sin; and shews, that God being persectly holy, can incline men to nothing but good. IV. He condemns those who contented themselves with hearing the word of God, without observing its directions; and those proud teachers, who presumed on themselves, and spoke evil of others: he shews, that the religion of such persons is vain; and teaches, that true religion consists in the practice of works of charity, and in renouncing the world.

# REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

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THIS chapter contains feveral useful instructions: I. The first is, that afflictions, and particularly those which we suffer for the gospel, ought to be an occasion of joy to all Christians, since they serve to try them, to render them perfect, and to make them obtain the crown of life, which God has promifed to those that love him. II. That God never refuses his grace and spiritual gifts to such as ask them of him with faith, and therefore it is our own fault if we are not endowed with them. III. That those true believers, who are but in a mean station in this world, should glory in the Lord; and on the contrary, that the rich and great ought to entertain fentiments of IV. The fourth instruction, well worth humility. our observation, is, that God is by no means the author of fin and temptation, but that fin does only proceed from ourselves; and that God is so far from being the cause of sin, that he is the author of all good, fince he has regenerated us by his word, that we may become new creatures. V. St James teaches us, that it is not sufficient to hear the word of God, but that our great and principal business is, to practise

what it commands; to attend to it with a peaceable, meek, and teachable disposition; and with a heart free from disorderly passions. VI. and lastly, We may learn from hence, that those who think themselves holy, and better than other men, and yet do not govern their tongue, are falsy religious; and that solid piety and true religion do chiefly consist in exercising charity towards the unhappy, and in preserving ourselves pure, so as not to be desiled by the corruptions of the world.

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traches, that true religion confitts in the

THIS chapter consists of two parts. I. St James reproves those who had regard to rich men, and despised the poor in the assemblies of the church. He shews, that faith in Christ Jesus did not allow of such distinction, since God has chosen the poor, as well as the rich, to give them the kingdom of heaven; and that the evangelical law, by which we are to be judged, is the law of charity and liberty. II. In the second part, St James consutes those who maintained, that we can be justified by faith in Christ, without good works; and he shews, by the very nature of faith, and by the examples of Abraham and Rabab, that the faith which is not attended with good works is vain, and cannot save us.

## REFLECTIONS.

IN the first part of this chapter we are taught, I. That Christians ought to prove by their behaviour, that they look upon one another as brethren, especially in their religious assemblies; and, in general, that no one should esteem the rich, because of his riches, nor despise the poor because of their poverty, since faith and piety may be found in the poor and mean, as well as in the rich and great; and since

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God has likewise chosen the poor, who are rich in faith, to make them heirs of his kingdom. too should teach the rich not to entertain fentiments of pride, nor despile or oppress the poor. II. St James teaches us, that the law of Christ is a law of charity, humility, and true liberty, and that God will judge us by that law. III. That he who breaks the law of God in one commandment, is as guilty in his fight, as if he had broken all the commandments; because all the commandments of this law proceed from God; and therefore we cannot wilfully tranfgress any one of them, without despising the majesty and authority of the Lawgiver; which proves, that true piety confifts in the practice of our whole duty, and that the abandoning ourselves to one fin only, and the continuing in one evil habit, is sufficient to exclude us from falvation. In the next place, it greatly concerns us to observe, what St James teaches concerning justification, in the fecond part of this chapter, and with what strength of argument he difproves the impious doctrine of those, who held that we are justified by faith without good works. The apostle shews, that true faith is necessarily attended with good works, and that the faith which does not produce good works is vain and dead: this he confirms by the example of Abraham, who manifested the fincerity of his faith by his obedience to God, in offering his fon Isaac; as also, by the example of Rabab, who, by receiving the spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, shewed that she was firmly persuaded God would give the land of Canaan to the children of Israel. From hence we may gather, that those who neglect good works, and do not prove their faith by a holy life, and by obedience to God's commands, are without true faith, and can by no means be justified, nor partake of falvation.

#### CHAP. III.

I. CT James forbids Christians to set up themselves of for teachers, and mafters over others, or to condemn or speak evil of other persons; and he represents what mischiefs and disorders the tongue may produce. II. He observes next, that meekness, forbearance, and love of peace, are the tokens by which true Christians are to be distinguished; and that herein lies the difference between true and falle We must observe, that what St James says here, relates to certain perfons, who thought themfelves more knowing and more perfect than others, who condemned with great pride and feverity those that were not of their opinion, and thereby diffurbed the peace of the church.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. THIS chapter treats first of the fins into which we may fall by the tongue, which we ought most seriously to observe. St James teaches us here, that the tongue may be the occasion of numberless evils; that by our discourse we may fin many ways against God, and against our neighbour; that by it the edification of the church may be destroyed, and the fire of division and discord kindled. This obliges us to regulate our words by the fear of God; to speak little; to avoid above all flander and calumny; and to abstain from every thing in discourse, that is contrary to charity and humility. That this duty is of the greatest importance, St James teaches us, when he remarks, that one of the furest tokens of true piety, is to know how to govern the tongue. apostle, in this chapter, gives us another mark, whereby to know those who are endowed with folid piety and true wisdom; namely, meekness and great moderation

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eat ion moderation in their discourse and all their behaviour. He declares in the ftrongest terms, that those who think themselves more knowing and more pious than others, but are indifcreet and infolent in their words, ill-natured, and full of envy and pride, and that speak evil of others, and occasion divisions, are only hypocrites; he fays, that wherever malice and flander prevails, there is all kind of evil, and no good to be expected. Lastly, He teaches us, that the true piety, which proceeds from heaven, is pure, peaceable, moderate, full of mercy and good fruits, fincere, and without hypocrify. All therefore who defire to be truly wife, should study to acquire this divine wisdom, the foundation of which is charity and to put on this spirit of meekness, moderation, fincerity and peace. Thus will they experience, both in this world and the other, what St James fays in the last words of this chapter: That the fruit of righteoufness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

### CHAP. IV.

I. ST James having mentioned the evils which the tongue and a spirit of strife and dissention do produce, shews in this chapter, that all these disorders proceed from carnal passions, and particularly from the love of pleasures, from pride, from a desire of preeminence above others, from the love of the world, and from a spirit of envy and jealousy. II. He exhorts those in whom these passions reign, to humble themselves, and draw near to God by repentance; and he particularly forbids slandering and rash judgments. III. and lastly, He condemns those who form projects and designs, without reslecting upon the vanity of life, and without considering that they depend upon the providence of God.

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therafelves more knowing and more sing WE learn here, I. That the love of pleasure, and our other passions, are the principal cause: of those evils which men do to one another, and of the divisions that prevail in the church. Wherefore we ought to wean our hearts from these passions, and particularly from the love of the world, which is the fourse of all irregular desires, and from pride; remembering that the scripture fays not in vain, that whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God; and that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the bumble. II. We fee, in this chapter, that when our passions, and the love of the world, have led us aftray from God, we must draw near to him again by repentance; we must be sensible of our misery, bewail our faults, resist temptations, rehounce the things of this world, and purify our hearts and all our actions; and then he will draw near to III. The apostle teaches us, that calumny is a great fin, fince he who fpeaks evil of his brother, who judges and condemns him, takes upon him to do that which belongs to none but God. IV. St James advises us to remember in all our designs, and particularly in those in which we have interest and advantage in view, that our life is short and uncertain, that it vanishes away like smoke; that it is, therefore, a great folly to form remote projects, presuming upon the duration of our own lives, and upon our own industry; and that we ought to depend upon the providence of God in all things. V. We learn from hence, that it is not sufficient for us to know our duty, but that we ought to make a right use of our knowledge, and the opportunities we have of doing good; without which our knowledge will only make us more guilty before God. This is the important

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portant advice contained in these words: He that knoweth good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.

#### CHAP. V.

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1. HE apostle having spoken, in the foregoing chapter, of those who labour to heap up riches, without confidering that they depend upon providence, denounces the judgments of God against the rich and covetous, against those that live in voluptuousness, and oppress the poor. II. He afterwards applies himself to Christians in affliction; he exhorts them to wait with patience for the coming of the Lord; not to complain too bitterly against those that did them evil; and to avoid every thing that denoted impatience, and particularly fwearing. III. He fhews laftly, the duty of those that are in affliction; orders those that are sick to send for the pastors of the church, and promises that they shall be healed, after the paftors had prayed for them, and anointed them with oil. This anointing was a ceremony practised in those times, by the means of which God wrought miraculous cures. St James speaks likewise of the confession of sin, of the efficacy of prayer, and of the fruits of brotherly reproof.

# REFLECTIONS.

HAT has been faid in this chapter ought to be a warning, I. To the rich; fince St James threatens with the curse of God all those rich men that are covetous, unjust, or make use of their wealth to live in pomp and luxury; those to whom God has given wealth, ought carefully to avoid covetousness, injustice, and voluptuousness; and to consider the vanity of riches, the temptations to which they expose men, and the terrible misfortunes into which all those fall who set their heart upon them, or Vol. III.

make a bad use of them. II. The apostle exhorts good men in affliction, and fuch was the condition of most good men at that time, to fuffer without complaining and murmuring, or fretting against any one. and to wait with patience till the Lord shall please to deliver them; and he informs them, that to learn patience, it will be of great use to meditate continually upon the fufferings of the faints, and the happy iffue of all their afflictions. III. This chapter teaches us, that all vain and rash oaths, of what kind soever, are absolutely forbid Christians, as well as all halty and angry expressions. IV. That those who are at flicted, ought to feek for comfort in prayer; that fick persons should call for their pastors to pray with them; and that the confession of fins and prayer, when performed with zeal, faith, and in a spirit of love, are of great weight in the fight of God. We may learn from the last words of this epiftle, that to reprove and admonish those who live in sin and error, is of very great advantage, not only to those who are admonished, but likewise to those who admonish them, since thereby we deliver a soul from death, and even obtain from God the forgiveness of our own fins.

The End of the GENERAL EPISTLE of St JAMES.

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# ST PETER.

#### ARGUMENT.

St Peter wrote this epiftle to the Christians dwelling in the provinces of Asia minor, who were most of them dispersed Jews; and it tends to confirm them in faith and holiness. It contains several very weighty instructions, and is one of the finest books in the New Testament.

# CHAP. I.

I. S T Peter praises God for having called Christians to salvation by Jesus Christ; for supporting them by this hope, and even filling them with joy in the midst of afflictions and persecutions. II. He shews how happy they were to know Christ, and to be witnesses of the accomplishment of the prophecies in the gospel. III. He exhorts them, by divers motives, to holiness, and to a life worthy of their Christian calling.

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REFLEC

REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

IN this chapter we are engaged to three principal duties. I. To render fervent and continual thanks to God for choosing us to salvation, and for giving us, by the refurrection of Jesus Christ, a firm and glorious hope of immortality. II. To confider feriously our happiness in knowing these mysteries, which were the expectation of the prophets, and the subject of their prophecies, and which are still the meditation and admiration of angels; God having afforded us in the gospel, the accomplishment of those promises which the prophets had made concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the redemption of mankind. III. The third duty is to remember, that all these glorious advantages oblige us to lead a pure and holy life. To persuade us to this, St Peter represents, 1. That God has delivered us from the ignorance and corruption in which men were involved when they knew not Christ. That as God who has called us is holy, we ought likewise to be holy in our whole behaviour. 3. That the God whom we invoke as a father, is likewife our judge, and will render to all of us according to our works. 4. That we have been redeemed and confecrated to God by the precious blood of Christ. And lastly, That we have received a new birth by the preaching of the gospel, which is the word of the living God, and remains for ever. These are powerful inducements to a holy and Christian life; let us have them continually before our eyes, and let us befeech God to render them efficacious in our hearts, by the power of the holy Amen. ipirit.

CHAP.

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# CHAP. II.

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I. C T Peter exhorts Christians to live in innocence, to grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Chrift, to cleave to him more and more by faith, and the imitation of his life; that so being united to him, and to each other by love, they may together compose one church, a temple devoted to the Lord: to engage them to which, he fets before them, on one hand, the unhappiness of unbelievers who rejected Christ; and on the other, the favour God had done them, in choosing them to be his people, confecrated to his fervice and to his glory. exhorts them next, to renounce the defires of the flesh, and to edify the Gentiles by their good behaviour; to fubmit themselves to kings and magistrates, and to love and honour all men. He recommends to Christian slaves, who served heathen masters, to be in subjection to them, and to bear with patience whatever was unneary and disagreeable in their condition; upon which occasion, he speaks of the obligation Christians were under to imitate the patience of Jesus Christ.

# REFLECTIONS.

W E remark in this chapter, I. That the character of the true children of God, is innocence, meekness, simplicity, sincerity, a real aversion to wickedness and hypocristy, and a continual desire of advancing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. II. We have here a beautiful description of the calling of the Gentiles. St Peter says, that the faithful are as so many living stones, which

compose a holy temple, in which there are offered spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jefus Christ; and that the church is an assembly of kings and priefts, and chosen people, a people which God has purchased to himself. This engages us to consider well the glorious condition to which God has exalted us, and to acknowledge the great goodness of God in choosing us for his people, who were formerly miserable heathens. And those noble titles given us by the apostle, should inspire us with fentiments worthy of fo holy a calling, and of persons consecrated to the service and glory of The duties which our holy and heavenly calling requires of us, are, as St Peter has described them with fo much beauty and energy, to shew forth the power of his grace, who has called us from darkness to his marvellous light; to abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul; remembering that we are strangers and pilgrims bere upon earth; to edify all men by a prudent and innocent behaviour; to fear God, reverence and submit ourselves to all our fuperiors, and to render to all their due. Lastly, It is one of the greatest duties of Christians to suffer patiently all the evils that may be brought upon them, and to fet before them the example of our redeemer, who, though he was guilty of no fin, did notwithstanding suffer with such wonderful patience; leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.

### CHAP. III.

I. S T Peter goes on with the duties of Christianity, and prescribes, I. The duties of wives and husbands. II. He exhorts all Christians to love one another, and to live in peace and innocency; affur-

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ing them that this is the way to be happy, even in this life, and in the midst of persecutions. III. To engage Christians to suffer persecutions patiently, and to make an open profession of the gospel, he tells them what Christ had suffered to atone for the fins of mankind, and to bring to God the Gentiles, and people who were in bondage to fin and ignorance; that entring into the church by baptism, and becoming new creatures, they might be saved, as Noab and his family had been formerly in the ark, in the time of the flood.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. CT Peter exhorts Christian women to be subject to their husbands, to behave with great meekness, to avoid luxury and immodesty in their apparel, and to be inwardly adorned with a pure. gentle, and peaceable spirit, which is of great value in the fight of God. Upon this he takes occasion to represent to the women who had husbands that were heathens, that by purity and innocence of manners, and by a modest and respectful behaviour, they might incline them to think favourably of religion, and even convert them to Christianity. Women who have the misfortune to be yoked with morose, ill-natured husbands, may learn from hence, how much piety and meekness may help to render their condition more supportable. II. He exhorts husbands to love their wives, to behave with prudence and kindness towards them, that their prayers be not hindered by their want of union. III. All Christians in general are here excited to mutual and unfeigned love, are taught to injure no one, not to revenge themselves, but to live in peace with all the world: St Peter telling them, with David, that this Ff4

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is the way to make life much more agreeable, to pacify our enemies, and to be happy even when we are perfecuted. IV. We fee in this chapter, that one of the principal duties of a Christian is. to make a fincere profession of Christianity, to keep a good conscience, and to be always ready to give an account of our faith with meekness and respect, upon all occasions that offer themselves. V. Towards the end of this chapter St Peter teaches us, that Christ suffered and rose again, and caused the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, to redeem men from the flavery of fin; and that as Noab was formerly faved in the ark, we are likewise saved by baptifm, which procures us admittance into the church of God; whence it follows, that we cannot attain to falvation but by faith in Christ; that it is necessary to make a publick profession of that faith in baptism; but that baptism is not sufficient to save us, if it be not accompanied with a pure confcience. And laftly, That those who obey not the gospel shall perish in their unbelief, like the inhabitants of the old world, who did not improve by the patience and forbearance of God, nor hearken to the preaching of Noah; for which reason, they perished in the waters of the flood.

# CHAP. IV.

ST Peter teaches in this chapter, I. That the sufferings of Jesus Christ obliged Christians to renounce the errors in which they lived before their conversion to the Christian religion; and particularly, the impure and dissolute life of the Gentiles; and to live in sobriety and godliness, waiting for the coming of our Lord. II. That Christians ought above all things to love and assist one another; and each

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nd ch each one to employ, to the glory of God, the different gifts he has received from him. III. That far from being surprised and discouraged at the sufferings they underwent for the gospel, they should account them very honourable; and surther, that if the faithful themselves are exposed to so many sufferings, and God spare not his church in this world, those who persecuted the faithful, and opposed the gospel, would not escape the righteous judgment of God.

#### REFLECTIONS.

HIS chapter contains feveral very useful instructions, I. That the consideration of what Christ suffered, engages us very strongly to renounce fin, and the lusts of the flesh, and particularly to avoid impurity and intemperance. II. That those who profess to fear God, ought not to think it strange if they are blamed by worldly men for not living like them, nor be moved either by their example or contempt. III. The third lesson is, always to fet before our eyes the end of all things, and the last coming of our Lord, to be prepared for it by a fober life, by diligence in prayer, and by the practice of the duties of charity. IV. That we ought every one of us to make use of the different talents we have received from God, whether they be temporal or spiritual, for his glory, and for the advantage of our neighbour; and that this is what those especially if they have any extraordinary talents, or any office in the church, are particularly obliged to. Lastly, St Peter teaches us, that it is both honourable and joyous to fuffer as a Chriftian; and that if the faithful and righteous are expoled to so many evils, unbelievers and wicked men

may expect much more terrible punishments. This consideration is very proper to encourage Christians to endure patiently, and even with gladness, all the evils which the profession of the gospel brings upon them from the wicked; and to inspire us all with a dread of God's judgments, and excite us more and more to a life of holiness.

#### CHAP. V.

ST Peter exhorts in this chapter, I. Pastors to discharge their duty. II. Young people to be in submission to their pastors and teachers, and to be humble. III. All Christians in general to live in sobriety and watchfulness, and to resist the temptations of the devil. IV. He concludes his epistle with wishes and salutations.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter describes, I. The duty of pastors, and the glorious reward they will receive from the Lord Jesus, if they faithfully discharge the duties of their ministry. What St Peter says on this fubject, ought to engage those who are in that office to serve God with integrity, to feed the flock of the Lord, to watch carefully over the sheep with which they are intrusted, and to exercise their charge, not by constraint, nor with a view of pride or interest, but with affection, and willingly, and in fuch a manner as to become examples to them of humility, and all kinds of virtue. II. St Peter teaches young people, that submission to their pastors belongs particu-Jarly to their age and condition; and all Christians in general are to remember, that humility is one of the principal virtues in Christianity, since God resisteth the proud, proud, and giveth grace to the humble. III. We are to remark, that our condition in this world exposes us to the temptations of the devil, and to various dangers; from which we cannot be secured without so-briety, vigilance, and continuing stedfast in the faith. Lastly, The prayer with which St Peter concludes this chapter, teaches us, that the Christian profession, and the hopes of eternal glory, oblige us to aspire more and more after perfection; and that the way to attain it, is to trust in God and to implore the continual help of his grace; beseeching the God of peace, who has called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, to make us perfect, to establish, strengthen, and settle us; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The End of the First Epistle of St PETER.

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# SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL

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### ARGUMENT.

It appears from this very epistle that St Peter wrote it a little before his death, about the year of Christ fixty-fix, to confirm Christians in the faith, in found doctrine and the practice of good works; and to prevent their being led away by false teachers, who to the profession of Christianity joined a carnal life; and to put them upon their guard against certain profane persons, that called in question the second coming of Christ. This epistle, as well as the foregoing, bears very evident marks of its divine authority, and is writ with great strength and majesty.

# CHAP. I.

T Peter in this chapter shews, that God having given us all that is necessary to live in holiness, we ought to join to our faith the practice of Christian virtues, and that this is the only means to enter into the kingdom of God.

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II. He next represents to the faithful, that he exhorted them after this manner, because he foresaw that he should be soon taken away from them by death. III. and lastly, He proves the truth of the gospel by the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, and by the prophecies of the Old Testament.

# REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

T the beginning of this epiftle we are taught, I. That God in his goodness and power, and by the glorious promifes he has given us in the gofpel, has afforded us every thing necessary to produce in us a spiritual and holy life, and make us partakers of the divine nature. St Peter could not more fully prove, that the end and delign of God's giving us his grace, is to make us live a godly life; that, with the affiftance of God's grace, we may recover from the corruptions of the world, and even attain to a great degree of perfection; that no necessary assistance is wanting to enable us to do it; and that, therefore, we are inexcusable if we do not. II. St Peter sets down particularly what our duty is in this respect, exhorting us to add to our faith prudence, temperance, patience, holiness, brotherly love, and charity; and to endeavour to make our calling and election fure; and shews the absolute necessity of all these duties, because we cannot any other way secure an entrance into the kingdom of God: but he tells us farther, that those who neglect these duties are blind, and will perish in their fins. III. The care St Peter took to warn Christians before his death, shews, that they who can be useful to their neighbours, ought to endeavour it whilft they are in this world, and to double their zeal as their end draws nigh. The ministers of the gospel ought particularly to dedicate their whole lives to this great end. IV. We see that St Peter proves the truth and divinity of the Christian doctrine.

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trine, by the testimony which he and his companions had rendered, of that which happened to our Lord when he was transfigured, and by the prophecies of the Old Testament. This obliges us seriously to at. send to these proofs, and carefully to read and meditate on the gospel, and writings of the apostles and prophets. As to the prophecies, we should consider particularly, that they were formerly fomewhat obfcure, but that at present they are very clear, and very proper to confirm us in the faith, and in our obedience to the doctrine and precepts of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

### CHAP. II.

I. HE apostle foretels, that false teachers should arife, who would cause divisions, and introduce pernicious doctrines; and he shews, by the punishment of the wicked angels, by the flood, and by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrab, that these deceivers, and those who followed them, should not remain unpunished. II. In the next place, he describes these false teachers as sensual persons, and such as speak evil of dignities; as unclean, addicted to covetousness, full of pride, vain and deceitful in their words; feducing the simple by their false promises of liberty; and he shews, that they involved in the greatest miseries all those that hearkned to them; and who, after they had known the truth, suffered themselves to be led away by their discourses.

# REFLECTIONS.

WE may learn from hence, I. That there were in all times, and always will be, false teachers, who endeavour to introduce dangerous doctrines, and to form fects and parties in the church. It was necessary this prediction should be often repeated by

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the apostles, that in after-ages we might not be furprised at the appearance of these seducers, and might take care not to fall into the fnares they should lay for us. II. This chapter flews us, that God has in all ages given proofs of his justice, as appears more particularly in the punishment of the rebellious angels, in the flood, and in the destruction of Sodom and the neighbouring cities. These examples teach us, as the apostle says, that the Lord knoweth bow to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to referve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly, that those who walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, shall receive the punishment they deferve; as is proved particularly by the destruction of the old world, and the burning of Sodom and Gomor-III. We are to give a particular attention to the characters by which the apostle represents these false teachers, telling us, that they were proud, enemies to government, entertaining fuch notions of independence as tended to fedition; that they were covetous. defigning men; inconftant, boafters; and, above all, addicted to fenfual pleasures. This shews us, that we ought to thun those in whom we find these characters, as dangerous persons, and that we ought chiefly to abominate all fuch doctrines as have a tendency to these fins, and which soothe us in our vices. By which we may likewise perceive, that it is the corruption of the heart, and of the passions, which commonly engage men in error. IV. Those to whom God has given knowledge and grace, ought to improve what they learn in this chapter, namely, that when having received these advantages, they suffer themselves to be overcome by the pollutions of the world, their last condition will be worse than the first: and that it were better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than to turn aside from it after they have known it. This is a most necessary piece

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of advice, and such as ought to induce even good people to a fear attended with watchfulness and precaution, and to exert continually their utmost endeavours to keep themselves, and to improve in the way of godliness.

### CHAP. III.

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I. THE apostle foretels, that there should be in the church profane men, who would call in question the second coming of Christ. To refute these, he declares, that as the world was formerly destroyed by the waters of the flood, it would likewise one day perish by fire; and that, if the coming of Christ were retarded, it was because God would give men time to repent. II. He shews, that the belief and expectation of the end of all things, and the hopes of being partakers of the world to come, oblige us to unwearied endeavours after holiness and perfection.

### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter treats of the last coming of Christ, and of the end of the world; and of the effect which this doctrine ought to produce in us. Upon the former of these articles we ought to consider these four things: I. That fince it has been foretold, that there would be in the last times scoffers, who would deny the most certain and most important truths of religion, we ought not to be furprifed if there be some in our times; but wherever we find them, to shun them as the most dangerous and worst of men. II. That it is likewise most certain, that the world must have an end, and that Jesus Christ shall come at the last day to judge the world. This we have a fure proof of in the flood; which is a fact undeniable, and univerfally acknowledged. III. That if God delays the punishment of the ungodly, and the last judgment,

it is owing to his goodness towards men, and that he may allow them time to repent, which should excite us to make a right use of the forbearance and patience of the Lord. IV. St Peter teaches us, that as the world was formerly destroyed by water, it will be confumed at the last day by fire; and the description which is here made of this end of the world, shews us what will be the majesty and terror of the last appearance of the Son of God. As for the effect which this doctrine should produce, the apostle tells us, that fince we know that this world is to be destroyed, and that there will be new heavens and a new earth, in which righteoufness will dwell, we cannot apply ourselves with too great earnestness to a holy life, and works of piety, so as not to be surprifed by that day, and to be then found by the Lord without spot or blemish. This consequence, which St Peter draws from the end of the world, should convince us, that nothing is of more use to animate us to a holy and Christian life, than continually meditating upon the end of all things, and the universal judgment. Let us therefore never forget these instructions; and seeing we know these things before, let us beware lest we also be led away with the error of the wicked; but let us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

The End of the Second Epistle of St PETER.

Vol. III.

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# FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL

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# ARGUMENT.

The design of St John in this epistle, is to secure Christians from being seduced by certain heretics, who denied that Christ was come in the sless, and that he was the Son of God; and who lived in licentiousness. Against these St John stablishes, in this epistle, the truth of the gospel, and the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ; of obeying him, and especially living in charity.

# CHAP. I.

I. S T John, to prove that the doctrine which he and the other apostles preached was the only true one, tells us, that neither he himself nor his collegues had taught any thing concerning the Son of God, but what they had seen and heard themselves, having lived with Jesus Christ; which the false teachers could not say. II. In opposition to these

these heretics, he shews in the next place, that the sum and substance of the doctrine which he preached was, that as God is light and holiness itself, none but those who walk in holiness, who sincerely confess their sins and forsake them, have any communion with God, and with Christ his Son.

# REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

I. THE first instruction we meet with in this chapter, relates to the truth of the gospel, which appears by the certainty of the testimony of the apostles, who preached nothing but what they had feen and heard, and their hands had handled. II. We observe here, that the design of the Christian religion is, to render men like God by holinefs. This truth St John declares most expressly, at the very beginning of his epiftle, when he tells us, that those who boast of being in communion with God and Jesus Christ, and yet remain in fin, are liars, and do not act with fincerity; and that there are none but those who to found faith add holiness of life, that are partakers of salvation. III. He teaches, that as all men were finners, and God had fent his Son to fave them, there was no other means to partake of the mercy of God, and of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ, than by sincerely confessing and forfaking their fins.

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# CHAP. II.

The apostle confirms in this chapter what he had advanced in the foregoing, that in order to have communion with God we must believe in Jesus Christ, and live a holy life. To this end he shews, I. That Christ has atomed for the sins of the whole world; but that none but such as keep his commandments, and live as he lived, have any share

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in that atonement. II. That the chief commandment of our Lord is, to love one another; and that those who do not love their neighbour, are in darkness and in death. III. He exhorts Christians of all ages, but particularly young people, not to love the world; because the love of the world was inconsistent with the love of God and his Son Jesus Christ. IV. He advises the faithful not to fuffer themselves to be feduced by impostors and antichrists, who denied that Jesus was the Christ, and the Son of God; and that they should stedfastly retain the pure doctrine, and the truth which was taught them from the beginning.

# REFLECTIONS.

T John teaches us here, I. That our Lord has atoned for the fins of all mankind, and interceeds for us with God. This is a doctrine full of comfort for finners; but it must be remembered, that the apostle confines the benefit of Christ's death and intercession to those that believe in him, and love him, and keep his commandments; and that he excludes those who obey him not, as hypocrites and II. We are here taught, that the chief duty of Christians is to imitate their Saviour, and to live as he lived. III. That among the commandments of Christ, that which has the first place, and to which all the rest may be reduced, is the love of our neighbour; that they in whom this love is found, are in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in them; but that those who do not love their brother are in darkness, and in a state of condemnation. IV. The apostle teaches us, that the doctrine of Christ engages Christians of all ages, and all conditions, to strengthen themselves more and more in the love of God, and of Jesus Christ: That old men in their advanced age are not without motives to the discharge of this duty; and that in this young men should em-

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ploy the strength and vigour of their youth. He exhorts young men in particular to renounce the love of the world; assuring them, that the love of riches, of pleasures, and of glory, is by no means confistent with the love of God. This is what young people ought most feriously to consider, in order to avoid the temptations to which their age exposes them; remembering for this purpose, that the world passetb away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever. V. The warning St John gives in this chapter, to beware of false teachers, that did not acknowledge Jesus for the Son of God, and for the Messiah, teaches us, that we ought never to hearken to those who spread doctrines contrary to the gospel; that faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely neceffary to falvation; and that we are not in danger of falling into error, if we have the unction of the holy Spirit; if we inviolably adhere to the doctrine taught. from the beginning by Christ, and by the apostles, and which is contained in the gospel: But St John informs us likewise at the same time, that faith in Christ engages us to live righteously and holily, that when he shall appear we may have entire confidence, and not be confounded by his prefence at his coming.

# CHAP. III.

In this chapter St John speaks, I. Of the love which God has shewn us in adopting us for his children, and of the glory he has reserved for us. He says, II. That the hope of this glory obliges us to purify ourselves; and that the end of Christ's coming was to withdraw men from sin, and to render them righteous and holy. III. He treats particularly about the love of our neighbour; he shews how necessary that virtue is, and its nature and effects; G g 3 and

and he adds, that the furest way to obtain peace of conscience, and to be filled with considence before God, is to love one another sincerely.

### REFLECTIONS.

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THIS chapter, which is one of the most instructive in the new testament, engages us, I. To celebrate the love of God our father, who has adopted us for his children; and to confider well the advantages of our adoption, and the glory with which the children of God will be crowned at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. II. The apostle teaches us, that those who have such glorious hopes must purify themselves; that the design of Christ's coming into the world was to destroy fin; that he that is a child of God does not fin, that is, does not live in a habit of fin, nor give himself up to fin; but that he who fins is a child of the devil: And that this is a fure mark to diffinguish the children of God from the children of the devil. This St John declares in the most express and formal manner; warning us very feriously not to suffer ourselves to be deceived in this point. III. Of all the duties of Christianity, St John chiefly infifts on charity; telling us, that the love of our neighbour is the true character of Christians, and that those in whom this love is not found, and who hate their brother, are murderers like Cain, and remain in condemnation and death. IV. St John instructs us concerning the nature and effects of true charity; informing us, that it ought not only to confift in words, but that it should be sincere and hearty, manifesting itself by its effects, and inclining us to assist our brethren, and, if it were necessary, even to lay down our lives for them, as Christ did for us. Lastly, The apostle teaches us, that by discharging these duties we shall be able to discover whether we are in the truth and in the love of God; and that

that this is the way to have peace of conscience, and a firm affurance of obtaining from him whatsoever we ask of him.

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# CHAP. IV.

Strine, but to try them whether they proceed from God or not; and to affift them in the discovery, he gives them these two rules, I. First, That those who did not confess that Jesus Christ was come in the slesh, and was the Messiah, ought to be rejected as people animated with the spirit of the world, and of error, and not with the spirit of truth. H. The second is, That religion consists in charity, which the apostle proves, by representing the greatness of the love which God has shewn in giving us his Son; from whence he concludes, that those who are not animated by a spirit of charity, do not love God, nor belong to him, and consequently ought not to be heard.

# REFLECTHONS.

CHRISTIANS may learn from hence, I. Not to receive all kind of doctrines, fince there have always been impostors in the world; but to examine them, to know whether they come from God or not. This every Christian has a right to do, and it is his duty not to neglect it. II. That it is one of the fundamental truths of religion, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of God, and that he was made man for our falvation. III. That charity is the fum and effence of religion, and the diftinguishing badge of Christianity. This St John repeats several times, and establishes it upon this principle, that God is love itself, and has manifested his love to men, by fending his Son to give them life. By all this we may discover, that the love of our neighbour is a duty absolutely necessary; and that those who are **ffrangers** Gg 4

strangers to it do not know God as they ought to know him, nor do any way belong to him. This St John declares in feveral places, and particularly in these words; He that says he loves God, and hateth bis brother, is a liar. This likewise shews us, that in order to produce in us this love, we should meditate upon the nature and perfections of God, who is all love; and upon that great goodness he has manifested to us, in giving us his Son to make an atonement for our fins; fince God has thus first loved us. we ought to love him most fervently, and to love one another: And by being more and more confirmed in the love of God and of our neighbour, we shall bear the image of our heavenly father, enjoy great peace and tranquillity of mind, and have confidence at the day of judgment, and at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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# CHAP. V.

I. C T John continues to shew, that the true children of God are known by the foundness of their faith, by their obedience to his commandments, and by charity. II. He teaches, that the truth of the gospel was confirmed from heaven, by the testimony of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoft; and upon earth, by the spirit, by water, and by blood. From whence he concludes, that the doctrine of the gospel, and the promises of eternal life, which are made us in Jesus Christ, ought to be received with a full affurance of faith. III. St John fays, that those who had such faith, were fure of obtaining from God all they should ask of him according to his will, even the health and life of their brethren; unless those for whom they prayed had committed certain fins which God thought fit to punish by a temporal death. IV. The apostle finishes this epiftle, by exhorting the faithful to keep themthemselves pure, to continue stedfast in the faith, and to avoid idolatry, and every thing that tended to draw them into it.

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# REFLECTIONS.

FROM this chapter, as well as the foregoing, we may gather, I. That none are the true children of God, but those who believe in his Son, who fincerely love their neighbour, and who keep his commandments. II. That the keeping of God's commandments is not a difficult or painful thing; but that, on the contrary, by the love of God, and by faith, we may eafily overcome the world and temptations. III. That fince the divinity of the gospel has been confirmed in fo authentic a manner, in heaven and upon earth, we shall remain without excuse, if we do not receive its doctrine as divine and heavenly, and if we do not observe the duties it pre-IV. That those who do the will of God, are fure to be heard by him; and that their prayers have great efficacy, unless they should ask certain temporal bleffings, which he does not think fit to grant them. This is a very valuable bleffing, which ought most powerfully to excite us to obey and love V. St John tells us, that those who are children of God do not fin, that is, do not fin as the wicked do; that fin does not reign in them; and he adds, that the wicked one has no power over them; and that they keep themselves pure, knowing that they belong to God; while the rest of the world lieth in fin and corruption. This is the duty and character of Christians, and of all the true Sons of God; and this too is the only means to keep up a faving communion with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God, and life eternal; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

The End of the First Epistle of St JOHN.

# SECOND EPISTLE

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# ST J O H N.

# ARGUMENT.

St John writes this epistle to a Christian lady, and to the church which was in her house. He exhorts her to persevere in the truth, and in charity; to shun false teachers, and to have no dealings with them.

# REFLECTIONS.

E may observe is this epistle, for our instruction, I. The zeal and piety of that lady to whom St John writes. This is an example which chiefly concerns Christian women, and which teaches them to adhere to godliness, and to cause it to reign in their families, as this lady did, whom St John so much commends. II. We see here, that all those who know the truth, and love it sincerely, do also love one another heartily, and join to the knowledge of the truth obedience to the commandments of God, and the practice of charity. III.

St John teaches us, that it is not enough to have begun well, and entered into the way of godliness; but that we must persevere to the end, so as not to lose the fruits of what we have done, but be qualified to receive a full reward. IV. The last instruction shews what we are to do with respect to those that teach false doctrines, and who have libertine sentiments, namely, not to receive them as brethren; but to avoid their company, and any correspondence with them, and to separate ourselves from them, and from all others, who do not live according to the precepts of the gospel.

The End of the Second Epistle of St JOHN.

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# THIRD EPISTLE

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# ST JOHN.

# ARGUMENT.

This epiftle is directed to a Christian named Gaius. St John praises the zeal which this faithful servant of God had for the truth, and his great charity towards the brethren. He recommends to him some persons who stood in need of assistance. He complains of a certain man named Diotrephes, who was probably a hishop; and gives a good character of Demetrius.

# REFLECTIONS.

N this epiftle we may observe, I. The tender love St John had for Gaius on account of his piety and charity, and his great joy to see him in so good a state: this teaches us to love and esteem those especially who fear God; and that the ministers of the Lord do never conceive more sincere pleasure, nor enjoy greater comfort, than when they know

know that those whom they look upon as their children do walk in the paths of truth and holiness. II. The example of Gaius, who received believers and strangers with so much heartiness, and whose charity had so good a favour in the church, should flir us up to do good to all our brethren, and particularly fuch as are persecuted for the gospel, and are forced to flee from one city to another. III. What he fays here of Diotrephes, who aspired at being the chief, and even opposed St John himself, shews, that persons who refuse to submit to order. and especially ambitious ministers, that lord it over others, occasion great evils in the church. But on the contrary, it is a great happiness when the ministers are humble and pious, and fuch as every body will speak well of, as was Demetrius. IV. St John gives us a very important piece of advice in these words, Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil bath not seen God. This is what distinguishes true Christians from impostors and deceivers. and it is by this likewife that we should examine ourfelves, and regulate our behaviour.

The End of the Third Epistle of St JOHN.

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# EPISTLE GENERAL

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# ST J U D E.

# ARGUMENT.

I. This epiftle, as well as the second epiftle of St Peter, which it is a kind of abridgment of, was writ against certain deceivers and profane persons, that bad crept into the church, who taught damnable doctrines, and lived most licentious and irregular lives. II. The apostle St Jude proves by many examples, that God would not spare them. He gives a description of their sentiments and behaviour, faying, they were carnal men, and addicted to impurity, and every thing that was infamous; enemies of government and order, disobedient, quarrelsome, proud, boasters, and self-interested: III. To preserve the believers from being seduced by these profane persons, be puts them in mind of what the apostles bad foretold concerning them, and exhorts them to continue in the love of God through faith - and prayer; to avoid every thing that might corrupt them; and to endeavour to deliver from error those that were engaged therein; making use of meekness towards some, and of wholsome severity towards others.

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### REFLECTIONS.

HE caution which St Jude gave formerly against the profane persons of his age, is not less necessary at present, since there are fuch a great number of libertines, who turn religion and the grace of God into diffoluteness and impiety; wherefore every one ought to be upon his guard against such persons. II. From the description which St Jude gives of those profane persons, we learn, that it is a fure mark of irreligion and impiety, when men who call themselves Christians live in impurity and uncleanness, to be in subjection to the higher powers, are proud and vain, and fond of independence, and make religion subservient to their interest. The apostle directs us not only to guard against the opinions and fentiments of these men, but even to avoid all intercourse with them. III. The example of the punishment which God formerly inflicted upon the rebellious angels, and upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrab, who had given themselves up to the most infamous pollutions; and the ancient prophecy of Enoch, which St Jude mentions, do all prove, that fuch libertines and impious persons shall not escape the judgment of God, and that he will take fevere vengeance on them; and that if they should escape in this life, they will not be fecure from his vengeance in the next. IV. St Jude teaches us, that the way to preferve ourselves from being seduced by these profane persons, is to remember that Christ and the apostles have warned us that there would be many fuch in the last times; to read and meditate on the facred writings; and to our reading and meditation to join prayer and watchfulness, as St Jude exhorts us in these admirable words: But ye, beloved.

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beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus. Christ unto eternal life. Lastly, This apostle informs us, that it is not sufficient to secure ourselves from the errors of the wicked, but that charity requires, that we should endeavour to deliver others who are engaged in it; making use, to that end, either of gentleness or severity, and of all other methods that prudence and zeal may suggest to us.

The End of the Epistle of St Jude.

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# REVELATION

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# ST JOHN the Divine.

# ARGUMENT.

This book is called the Apocalypse, or Revelation, because it contains the revelation which God made to
St John in the isle of Patmos, where he was banished
by the emperor Domitian. The three first chapters
relate to the principal churches that were then in Asia
minor; and the following shew what was to happen
in the church till the end of the world. In this book
there are some places that are pretty clear; but there
are likewise visions and prophesies which are obscure,
and differently explained; on which we shall make no
particular restections.

# CHAP. I.

I. In the next place, he relates a glorious vision,

Vol. III.

N this chapter St John speaks of the usefulness of the prophesies contained in this book,
wishes grace and peace to the seven churches
of Asia, and foretels the coming of Jesus Christ.
II. In the next place, he relates a glorious vision,
Vol. III.

in which our Lord appeared to him, and commanded him to write, in his name, to the feven churches of Afia.

REFLECTIONS after reading the chapter.

I. THE beginning of this chapter teaches us, that the reading and meditating upon this book of the Revelation, is very profitable. Accordingly, we ought to make a good use of the things which it contains; and although we find in this book fome prophesies that are hard to be understood, there are other paffages in it whose sense is clear and evident, and which are very instructive. II. The prayers and thanksgivings with which St John begins this book, express the sentiments of all true believers; who ought to beg the grace and peace of God for themselves, and for all the churches, and to render fervent and continual thanks unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and bath made us kings and priests unto God and his father. III. St John's prediction of the coming of Christ, shews, that the defign of this book of the Revelation, is to warn men of that coming, which must be so comfortable to believers, and so dreadful to the wicked; and that we ought continually to meditate on this glorious coming of our Saviour. IV. In this magnificent appearance of our Lord, which is here related, we may observe chiefly, the majesty of Jesus Christ, and the care he takes of his church, This is fignified in the description here made of our Lord's glorious appearance to St John, and of the seven candlefticks of gold, in the midst of which Christ stood, which represented the seven churches of Asia; and the feven stars, which he held in his right hand, fignified the angels, that is, the bishops and pastors of those churches. This vision, and our Lord's explanation

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planation of it to St John, teaches us, that Christ is in the midst of his church; that he governs it; that he sees every thing that passes therein; and, that its pastors are appointed by his authority. This ought to be a great inducement, not only to pastors, but to all Christians, to rely upon Christ, to serve him faithfully; as being always under his eye, who is the king, and supreme pastor of the church, and judge of all men.

# C H A P. II. 1-11.

THIS part of the second chapter of the Revelation contains two epistles, which St John wrote by the order of Jesus Christ. I. The first is directed to the angel, that is to say, to the bishop of the church of Ephesus, and to all his slock. Our Lord praises the faith of that church; but reproaches them for their growing cold, and abating of their first love, and threatens to take away their candlestick, that is, to deprive them of the preaching of the gospel. II. The second letter is directed to the church of Smyrna. Our Lord commends her also, but foretels that she should be persecuted, and exhorts her to perseverance.

# REFLECTIONS.

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ON the epiftles contained in this and the following chapter, we must first make these four resections: I. That they all begin with these words, I know thy works; which teaches us, that the state of every church is perfectly known to Christ, and that he sees all the good and evil that is in it. II. That Christ repeats in all the epistles the following words: He that bath an ear, let him bear what the spirit saith unto the churches. This warning denotes the importance of the things which Saint John wrote in these epistles, by the order of our Lord, and obliges us H h 2

very feriously to attend to them. III. That at the end of each epistle, our Lord makes glorious promises to those that overcome, that is to say, to those that conquer temptations, and perfevere to the end in faith and obedience. These promises are conveyed in figurative expressions, which denote the valuable bleffings which our Lord bestows on his elect in this life, and the happiness he reserves for them in heaven. Laftly, That the threatnings which Christ denounces in these epistles against the churches of Asia minor, were executed afterwards, as we see even at this day, in the fad condition to which those churches, that were formerly fo flourishing, are now reduced. the two epiftles addressed to the church of Ephesus, and of Smyrna, we may observe, I. That Christ commends those two churches for not suffering the wicked to remain among them; by which we learn, that our Lord would not have false teachers suffered to continue in the communion of the church, any more than the vicious and fenfual, fuch as were the Nicolaitans, mentioned in the epiftle to the church of Ephesus, who were guilty of all uncleanness. Christ's reproaches of the church of Ephesus for having forfaken her first love, and threatning to remove her candleftick if she did not repent; shews plainly, that God withdraws his protection from churches that grow careless and lukewarm, especially in respect of charity; and that he fuffers them to be perfecuted, and even destroyed, as it happened some time after to the church of Ephesus. III. We see in the epistle to the church of Smyrna, that God does fometimes expose Christians to persecution; but that it ought not to shake their constancy, fince he does not abandon them in those trials, and has moreover promised to bestow a crown of life upon those that are faithful unto death.

CHAP.

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# CHAP. II. 12-29.

TE have, in this part of the second chapter, two epistles which Christ ordered to be wrote, one to the church of Pergamos, and the other to the church of Thyatira. I. He praises the zeal and constancy of those of the church of Pergamos, and exhorts them not to fuffer those who retained the doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitans: these were false teachers, that drew away Christians into idolatry and impurity, as Balaam of old caused the Israelites to fall into the same sins, by the advice he gave to Balak king of Moab. II. He gives the same advice to the church of Thyatira, under the character of Jezebel; by whom he understands the same seducers, who were like Jezebel the wife of Abab, and perhaps fome woman who called herself a prophetes. He threatens them, and those that followed them, with destruction; and he exhorts this church to persevere in the purity of the faith.

# REFLECTIONS.

WE may make the four following reflections upon these two epistles: I. Christ praises the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, for their steadiness under persecution, which appeared more particularly in the martyrdom of Antipas; as also for their saith and charity; and takes notice, that their last works exceeded their first. From hence we may gather, that the glory of any church before God and man, is constancy in affliction, perseverance in faith; and progress in piety and good works. II. We see however that our Lord reproves these churches for suffering among them salse prophets, who taught, that it was lawful to eat of things facrificed to idols; and who, by their doctrine and example, engaged H h 3 Christians

Christians in impurity, in fensuality, and idolatry. These reproaches, which Christ repeats more than once, shew, that we ought not to tolerate in the church such as corrupt the purity of faith and manners by pernicious doctrines, and particularly those that live in impurity, or entice others to it; and, that the churches which fuffer these persons, and these offences, do what is very disagreeable to Christ, and draw upon themselves his indignation and wrath. III. We observe, in the epistle to the church of Thyatira, that God warns the false teachers, and those who were joined with them, that he gave them time to repent; but, that if they did not make a good use of his forbearance, he was going to visit them with his judgments, and make them an example. Thus does God deal with the greatest sinners: he destroys them not till he has first threatned them, and bore long with them. IV. Our Lord declares expressly here, that he will judge all those who fuffer themselves to be led away by error or vice; but that he will gloriously reward those who remain stedfast in their obedience to him. This is fignified in the following words, which are well worthy our confideration: All the churches shall know, that I am be that fearcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works .- He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: - Even as I received it of my Father.

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# CHAP. III.

THIS chapter contains three epiftles. I. The epiftle to the church of Sardis; which Christ reproves sharply, for having only the name and appearance of Christianity: he exhorts her to repentance; threatens her, and promises his favour to those members

members of that church who had preserved themselves undefiled. II. The second epistle is to the
church of Pbiladelpbia: he praises her zeal and stedfastness, and makes her particular promises of his
protection. III. The third is the epistle to the
church of Laodicea: our Lord reproves her for her
lukewarmness, and for the good opinion she had of
herself: he exhorts her to get out of this dangerous
state, and to improve his corrections, and the invitations of his grace.

#### REFLECTIONS.

I. IN the church of Sardis, which had the appearance of life, but was really dead, and in danger of being overtaken by the judgments of God, we have the picture of feveral Christian churches, that have only a shew of Christianity, and are likewise threatned to be deprived of the love and protection of Jesus Christ. But as there were at Sardis some persons who had kept themselves pure, and whom God was pleased to spare, we ought also to believe, that in the greatest depravity and corruption, there are likewise some elect, that have kept themselves undefiled, and whom God will gloriously distinguish from wicked and false Christians; which is matter of great comfort to all those who love the Lord Jesus, and walk in innocence, in a corrupt and depraved age. II. In the epiftle to the church of Philadelphia, we must observe, that our Lord praises her above all the churches of Asia, promising to distinguish her, and secure her from those evils with which the rest were threatned: which accordingly happened; this church being spared when the rest were destroyed, and fubfifting even to this day, in a pretty happy This is a very express instance of God's favour, and protection of those churches where piety prevails. III. The epiftle to the church of Laodicea teaches Hh4

teaches us, first, that lukewarmness in religion is altogether odious to the Lord; that he rejects lukewarm and half Christians, and that we cannot please him but by a fincere and fervent zeal. Secondly, That those, who being corrupted and dissolute, think they are in a good state, are in most danger; and that in order to extricate themselves from it, they should learn to know themselves well, to have a lively sense of their misery, and to seek for remedy in the grace and in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, That God, in order to bring finners to this flate of repentance, corrects them in his love, and offers them his grace with much patience and goodness, as he himself expresses it in these words: Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to bim, and will sup with him, and he with me. Let us be sensible of these invitations, which our gracious Redeemer makes us, and let us receive them with readiness and gratitude, to the end we may enjoy the bleffed effects of communion with him.

# CHAP. IV.

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ST John here relates a vision, in which God appeared to him with the tokens of his majesty; and describes the praises with which the saints and angels, here represented by the four and twenty elders, and by the four beasts or living creatures, celebrate his glory and give him thanks.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. WE see in the vision here related, on one hand, a representation of the glory and majesty of God; and on the other, the glory with which the saints and angels, who shall be in the presence of God for ever, will be crowned in heaven; which

which ought to inspire us with fentiments of reverence and fear for that great God whose glory fills heaven and earth; and with an ardent defire of being one day made partakers of the happiness of the faints in glory. II. As it is faid in this chapter, that the faints, who were about the throne of God, did continually praise him day and night, and cast themselves down before him, worshipping him who liveth for ever; we should learn to discharge, even now, this duty, which will then be the everlafting employment of the bleffed; namely, to praise God, to render him our homage, and to fay always, and with all our heart; Holy, boly, boly, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. - Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and bonour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

# CHAP. V.

THIS chapter contains, I. The vision of the book sealed with seven seals, which could not be opened but by the lion of the tribe of Judah, and by the Lamb, that is to say, by Christ. II. The song of the saints in praise of our Lord.

# REFLECTIONS.

IT is not easy to determine what is the exact meaning of the vision contained in this and the following chapters. However, as it is said that no body could open this book but Jesus Christ; this teaches us, that since he is the author of these prophesies addressed to St John, he knows the meaning of them, and will bring about the accomplishment of them. We are further to observe, that the saints in glory will be employed in praising to all eternity Jesus Christ our Redeemer, because he has suffered death for

for us, and redeemed us by his blood. Let us therefore bless him from henceforth for ever; let us join our thanksgivings to those of thousands of angels, and of all the glorified spirits; saying with them, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. — Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

# CHAP. VI.

THIS chapter is a sequel of the vision of the book sealed with the seven seals, begun in the foregoing chapter. What is chiefly to be observed in it, are the complaints of the souls of the martyrs, and the answers which they received. Saint John describes next, the judgments of God upon the wicked, and their despair when God shall come to punish them.

# REFLECTIONS.

THough the meaning of all that is faid in this chapter is not perfectly known, we may, nevertheless, make these two useful reflections upon it. I. First with regard to the complaints of those who had suffered death for the sake of Jesus Christ, and the answer they received. The design of this vision was to comfort the faithful under persecution, and to teach Christians not to think it strange if God fuffered his faints to be persecuted, and their blood to be shed, and did not immediately take vengeance on their persecutors: that God dealt thus with them for wife and just reasons; and that he would not fail to avenge them, when the number of their brethren should be accomplished; and that in the mean time, the fouls of his faints are preserved after death, and enjoy

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enjoy rest, in expectation of the day of their final deliverance, and of their glory. II. We have in the fecond part of this chapter an emblem of the end of the world, and of the last judgment; and particularly we observe in it a lively description of the terror and despair with which those who persecute the faithful, and all the other enemies of God, will be feized at that day; which is pathetically described in these words: They bid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and faid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and bide us from the face of bim that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Let these expressions be often present to our minds, that they may keep up in us a religious dread, which will be of great use to direct us to avoid that terrible condemnation and despair, which will one day be the portion of the wicked, and of all the enemies of our Lord.

# CHAP. VII.

I. GOD forbids the angels of his wrath to hurt his elect. II. St John represents the happiness and triumph of the saints, and particularly of those that shall have suffered for the truth.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. Though we do not know exactly what the first verses of this chapter relate to, yet we may conclude from the command which was given to the angels, to do no harm to God's elect, who were marked with his seal, that God knows all his faithful servants, that they are very dear to him, and that he spares them when he visits the inhabitants of

of the earth with his judgments; and above all, that he will secure them from his wrath at the last day. II. This chapter represents, in a very affecting manner, the triumph and glory of the bleffed, and particularly of the martyrs that shall have suffered for Christ; the joy that shall be heaped upon them after their labours, and the felicity which God referves for them. To this purpose, St John tells us, that they shall be before the throne of God; and shall serve bim day and night in his temple; and that he that fitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; that they shall bunger no more, neither thirst any more; -for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters; and that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. This supreme, this everlasting felicity, is destined not only for martyrs, but is referved by God for all those that shall keep themselves pure in this world, and shall glorify him by their patience and obedience. Therefore these words of St John ought to fill all true Christians with joy and consolation, raise in them an ardent desire and a firm expectation of that great glory, and excite them more and more to holiness and the love of God.

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# CHAP. XIV.

I. The joy and happiness of those who have been found faithful to the Lamb, and have kept themselves pure; and their thanksgivings to God when they shall see his kingdom perfectly established, and that of Satan destroyed. II. The fall of the mystical Babylon, the punishment of those who shall be partakers of its errors and its crimes, and the happiness

happiness of those who die in the Lord. III. The vision of the harvest, and of the vintage.

### REFLECTIONS.

I. WHAT we are to confider upon this chapter is, that St John said, he saw a multitude of the elect of God standing in his presence, and finging a new fong before his throne; but that none could fing this fong, fave those who had not defiled themselves, who had followed the Lamb, and in whom no guile was to be found. This teaches us, that the happiness of the saints will be infinite, and that they shall be for ever with God; but that none can be admitted to this fovereign happiness, and to the communion of the bleffed, but those who shall have kept themselves pure, and have renounced themselves, bearing their cross, and constantly following Christ their Saviour. II. We learn from hence, that the time will come, when the spiritual Babylon shall be destroyed, with all those that have been partakers of its idolatries and abominations; and that the punishment of the enemies of the church, of apostates, and of the wicked in general, will endure for ever and ever. III. The spirit of God declares in this chapter, that those who die in the Lord are bleffed, that they rest from their labours, and that their works follow them. These affurances from the spirit of God, of the happy state of believers after death, are a great confolation to true Christians, and should stir us up to a holy life, to the end we may look upon death with confidence, and enjoy that rest and happiness which is prepared for those who live and die in the Lord.

# CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter has two parts. I. In the former, St John foretels that Satan should be bound, and that Christ should reign with the saints and martyrs a thousand years. II. In the latter he speaks of the last judgment.

# REFLECTIONS.

IN this chapter we have two very remarkable prophesies. I. The first is, that Satan should be bound for the space of a thousand years, and that then our Lord would reign gloriously with the martyrs and faints. Now, though we do not well know the whole meaning of this prophely, yet it feems to imply, that there will be a time when the church shall enjoy rest, and shall be more pure and holy than it has ever been; and that then the faints, and especially the martyrs, shall be crowned with great glory. This will come to pass when all nations are converted, and the kingdom of antichrift destroyed, and the Lord shall reign gloriously in his church; after which Satan shall be loosed, and the church shall undergo some persecution before the end of the world. II. The fecond prophely relates to the last judgment. We see by what St John fays of it, the majesty in which Christ will appear at that day; the general refurrection of all men; their standing before the throne of our Lord, who will judge all according to their works, and the issue of his judgment, viz. that the wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire, and the righteous made partakers of eternal life. These great truths ought to be always prefent to our minds, and engage us to pray, and to labour continually to improve in piety, that at that day, so formidable to the wicked, we

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we may appear before our Lord with confidence, and our names be found in the book of life.

# CHAP. XXI.

I. ST John here describes the renovation of all things, which will be at the end of the world; the joy prepared for the righteous, and the punishments which are reserved for the wicked. II. He represents next, in figurative terms, and by magnificent images, the heavenly Jerusalem, the glory of God's kingdom, and the eternal happiness of the elect.

### REFLECTIONS.

THE description St John gives of the new Jerufalem, teaches us, that at the end of ages, all things will be renewed, and that then the kingdom of God, and of his faints, will appear in all its glory; and we may judge by the great and splendid images, which the spirit of God makes use of in this chapter, what will be the beauty and magnificence of that glorious habitation to which the faints shall be admitted; where God will dwell with them, where he will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and where he himself will be their glory and their happiness. This ought to excite in us an ardent defire to be of the number of those that shall be received into the heavenly Jerusalem. And since it is written, that no polluted thing shall enter therein, and that the portion of unbelievers, of the timorous, of unclean persons, of murderers, of idolators, of liars, and of other finners, shall be the lake burning with fire and brimstone; let us with great zeal endeavour to purify ourselves, that we may be thought worthy to be admitted into heaven to behold its beauties, and to be put in possession of that supreme beati-

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tude, which Saint John in this chapter gives a defcription of.

#### CHAP. XXII.

I. ST John continues to describe the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem. II. The angel confirms to him the truth of the prophesies contained in this book, and commands him to publish them. III. Jesus Christ declares, he would come quickly to receive the saints into his glory, and to punish the wicked; and St John expresses how ardently the faithful desire the coming of their Saviour.

#### REFLECTIONS.

THIS chapter, which is the last of the Revelation, and of all the holy writings, fets before our eyes, the end and confummation of all things. We here fee, how great will be the glory and happiness which the elect will eternally enjoy in the presence of God, and of Jesus Christ their Saviour; and we also learn, that none will be admitted to this happiness but those who endeavour after it, and who keep the commandments of God; but that the impure, and the wicked in general, shall be excluded from it for ever. Thus we fee what will be one day the lot of good and bad men, and what God proposes to do at the end of the world. Since he has so expressly warned us of it, let us be continually meditating upon it; let us remember, that all these things are most certain, and that God revealed them to St John, and was pleased they should be written in this book, for the instruction and edification of the church in all ages. II. It is faid in this chapter, that when St John was going to throw himself at the angel's feet, who talked with him, the angel faid unto him, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and

of thy brethren the prophets: worship God. This proves. that it is unlawful to worship any but God, in any manner whatever; and that, therefore, all religious worship paid to angels or faints must be very finful. III. It must be observed, that the angel told St John. that the truths contained in this book would not produce the fame effect upon all; that the wicked would corrupt and defile themselves daily more and more, whilst the righteous and the faints are continually improving in holiness. This we see daily happen; but let us remember, that the Lord has forewarned us of it, and that he will at length come to judge both the righteous and the wicked, as he himself has declared at the end of this book, faying, Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Let us continually pant after his coming, and while we wait for it, let us persevere in well-doing, and let us fay with the bride, which is the church, and with all her true children, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

# Here ends the New Testament.

God grant us grace to make a good use of all that we have here read and heard, to meditate upon it, and to practise it our whole lives, to the glory of God our father, and to the advancement of our own salvation.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

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